Bengaluru Sunday, October 26, 2025 Pages 22 Vol 78 No 295 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Veteran actor Satish Shah dies at 74

Star played iconic roles in films, TV serials

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Travel *Page18*

Charming Amsterdam

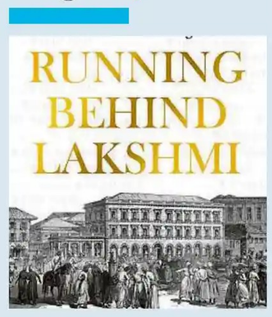
The Dutch city of picturesque canals, vintage facades and edgy cafes is all set to turn 750 tomorrow

Art & Pursuits *Page20*

Tradition meets tempo

The 'OG' fusion maestro Taufiq Qureshi chats about keeping rhythm alive in an age of autotune and AI

Books *Page17*



Wealth instinct

This erudite work explores how India's markets tell a vivid story of ambition, money, and mythmaking

Food & Drink *Page19*

Taste of Vietnam

Get a lowdown on the best eats from Hanoi, from pho to bahn mi and bun cha, and where to find them

Quickly

Kurnool fire: Phone batteries under lens

After 19 passengers were killed when a private bus caught fire in Kurnool, forensic experts have pointed fingers at a consignment of over 300 smartphones for the intensity of the blaze. It is suspected that the batteries of these phones could have exploded.
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LIC clarifies on Adani investments

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) on Saturday said its investments in Adani group companies have been made independently and in accordance with its board-approved policies, following detailed due diligence. The statement was in response to a report in The Washington Post.
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Rohit, Kohli star in India win over Aussies

Rohit Sharma struck his 50th international hundred and Virat Kohli played time-bending knock in possibly their last outing in Australia, propelling India to a consolation nine-wicket victory in the third ODI here on Saturday.
Details on Page 11

First double hat-trick in Ranji history

Services bowlers Arjun Sharma and Mohit Jangra recorded the first-ever instance of two bowlers taking hat-tricks in the history of the Ranji Trophy in their Elite Group C match against Assam in Tinsukia on Saturday. Assam were bowled out for 103 with Jangra returning 4-2-5-3 and Arjun taking 5/46 in his 6.1 overs and in reply, the home team struck hard as they bundled Services for 108.
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Vigyan Ratna award for late astrophysicist

India's most celebrated astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar, who died in May, was on Saturday selected for the Vigyan Ratna Puraskar, the country's top science award. He challenged the widely accepted Big Bang theory and proposed that the universe had always existed with continuous creation of new matter into infinity.

Stolen futures: Tackling India's missing children crisis

A child disappears every eight minutes in the country, fleeing conflict at home, chasing love or falling prey to traffickers. Yet, the system's response is reactive and not preventive

PAVAN KUMAR H
DH NEWS SERVICE

Every day, amidst the rush of trains and the chaos of passenger chatter at Bengaluru's Yeshwanthpur railway station, Railway Protection Force (RPF) officer Puttegowda K L keeps his eyes not only on the tracks but also on the faces in the crowd.

INSIGHT

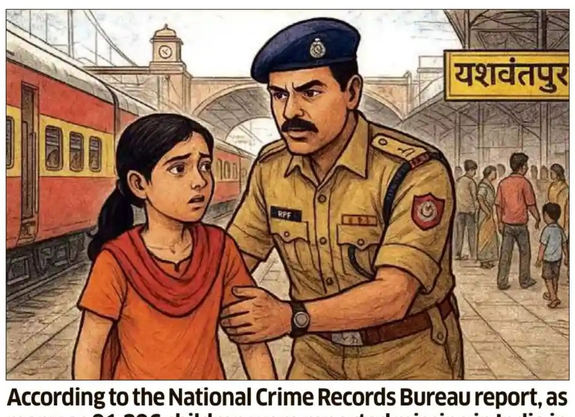
In the last two years, he has rescued more than 150 children from potential danger. They are either runaway children chasing uncertain dreams or minors being trafficked to fuel the capital city's endless hunger for cheap labour.

For Puttegowda, spotting a lone teenager stepping off a train from the north or northeastern states is now instinctive. "Every third day, I come across a teenager travelling alone and without a ticket," he says.

"When questioned, they often give vague answers, saying they are in Bengaluru to visit relatives or to study. But when we call their parents, seven out of ten admit they have run away from their homes," he says.

Yet, for every child he rescues, many more slip through, as adults who claim to be relatives, accompany them. "I feel helpless," he admits. "I know some are being taken to work in hotels or construction sites, but without legal authority, I cannot stop them."

Puttegowda's unease is not misplaced. Officials say many of these children are at risk of exploitation. At the Government Girls' Balmandir in Hubballi, 15-year-old Geeth*, waits to return home. The eldest of five daughters of a mason from Bihar's Siwan, she fled after her father took away her mobile phone, cutting her off from a man she had befriended on social media eight months ago. Before leaving, she just dropped a message to her 'friend' about her arrival in a train to Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.



According to the National Crime Records Bureau report, as many as 91,296 children were reported missing in India in 2023, a 9.5% rise from the previous year. AI-GENERATED IMAGE

For the next three days, Geeth kept calling her 'friend', waiting for a response that never came. With nowhere to go, she spent her nights at railway stations, bus stands and market areas. On the fourth day, fearing her parents' anger and dejected by her social media friend's betrayal, she randomly boarded the first train that halted before her. She was eventually rescued at Hubballi by the Meri Saheli team, an initiative by the RPF for women passenger safety, and was shifted to the government-run care centre.

"I was scared to call home. I thought I would never be forgiven," Geeth says. Geeth was among the four girls admitted to the shelter in Hubballi this month — all runaways from different regions, and driven by teenage love, conflict at home or the search for acceptance.

Back home, Geeth's father, Chandrakant* had only 'informally' alerted the police about his missing daughter, fearing the social stigma around filing a formal complaint. To neighbours, the family said Geeth, a district-level football player, had gone to Delhi for a tournament. When he finally learnt of her whereabouts, Chandrakant came to Hubballi and persuaded the Dharwad Child Welfare Committee to let him take her home, assuring them of her safety and care.

Chandrakant was lucky to have found his daughter. Many parents never get that closure.

In Mudhol, Bagalkot district, Rajanna (48) has been searching for his 14-year-old son Somu* for five months. "Unlike his academically bright sisters, Somu was not interested in studies even though we provided him all comforts," Rajanna says.

"As the school insisted that he improve his learning abilities, I put pressure on him to perform better. When he failed to score well in Class 7 annual exams, he smashed his phone. I told him I would fix it only if he did well next time. The next morning, he was gone," he says.

▸ Missing children, Page 2

Reading between the lines of Karnataka's caste census

Training lapses and elite resistance may distort the data, but careful interpretation can still reveal the deeper truths of social inequality

NARENDAR PANI

The Karnataka Social and Educational Survey, or the caste census as it is popularly known, has come up against two challenges. There is an internal problem of the training of enumerators and an external one of the rebellion of the privileged. These challenges will affect the quality of the data the survey generates but an appropriate interpretation of the data could still ensure that the exercise serves its purpose.

The inadequate training of the enumerators is evident in the way the questionnaire was canvassed. Without adequate training the enumerators did little to control their bias. They typically rushed to assume answers rather than wait for the respondent's reply. They often assumed that the caste of the wife would be the same as that of the husband. While this may have been true in most of the cases, the assumption ensured the survey will not capture the extent of inter-caste marriages. This data would have been useful as an indicator of a decline in caste practices.

The second, and in some senses more serious, challenge has come from sections of the most privileged in the state's society acting in ways designed to distort the results. Prominent families have refused to participate on the grounds that they are not backward. It is interesting that some of those who made their fortunes through the sale of knowledge are not aware that an accurate picture of backwardness can only emerge from a comparison with the forward sections of society. The poor in the United States are defined in contrast to what the middle class and the rich in that society have. This is what leads to their being considered poor even if they have assets that the middle class in South Sudan or Afghanistan cannot dream of owning. By opting out of the survey the privileged are ensuring that any internal comparison between the richest and the poorest would be distorted.

The knee-jerk response to these deficiencies would be to question the validity of the survey and dismiss its results. This would, however, be a case of the best being made an enemy of the good. The value of the survey is best seen in relation to what exists. As of now there is very little scientific data on caste. The last census of caste was nearly a century ago. And yet caste plays a significant role in Karnataka's public policy. This is formally recognised in the case of reservations, but it can also play a role in informal narratives around public policy. The absence of data allows for doubts in the public mind about actions that may, in fact, be perfectly legitimate. Is, for instance, the allotment of large tracts of land for the knowledge industry biased in favour of castes that have traditionally had a monopoly on knowledge?

There may be a temptation to fill in some of the blanks left in the data by the privileged abandoning the survey. It would be tempting to assign castes to households that have refused to participate but are headed by persons who have attached their castes to their names or have names associated with specific castes. Such exercises are, however, far from perfect and could seriously distort the data.

▸ Caste census, Page 2

An enumerator collects data for the Karnataka Social and Educational Survey from a family in Haveri. DH PHOTO

The **SUNDAY STORY**

SAD DEMISE

With deep regret and sorrow,
we inform you of the sad demise of our beloved

Shri Pathi Praveen

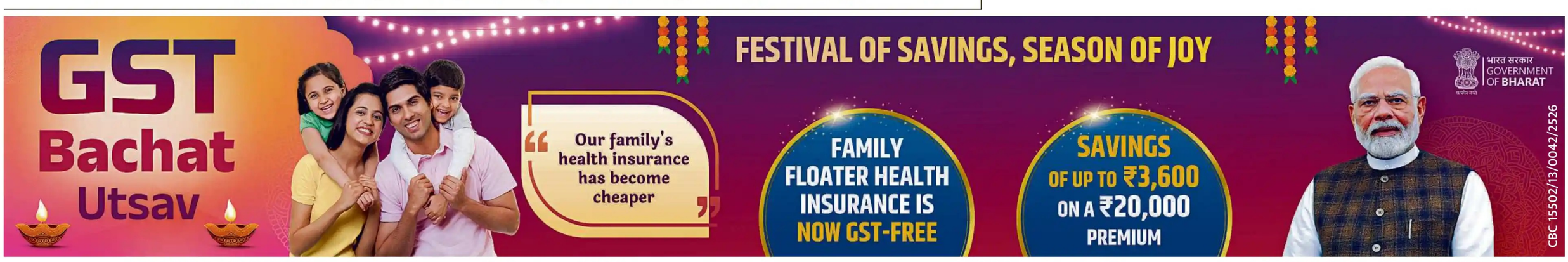
who attained the lotus feet of the Lord
at 12:50 AM on 25th October, 2025.

The body will be kept at his residence
**"Shruthi", No.252, Middle School Road,
V V Puram, Bangalore.**

Rituals:
Time: 9:00 am - Date: 26-10-2025, Sunday
at the residence

Cremation:
11:00 am at TR Mills,
Hindu Burial Ground, Chamarajpet

Kindly keep him in your prayers
Deeply mourned by:
SVS Family.



Focused interventions crucial

Missing children, from P1

They searched for Somu in Bengaluru, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Mumbai and other places but to no avail.

Every eight minutes, a child goes missing in the country. Every day, hundreds run away from home for reasons ranging from family conflict to academic pressure, unaware of the dangers awaiting them. Many others are kidnapped or trafficked for begging, forced labour or sexual exploitation. While around 90% of the missing children are eventually traced with the help of government agencies and NGOs, experts warn that the country is still reacting to the crisis rather than preventing it.

According to the recent National Crime Records Bureau report, nearly 91,296 children were reported missing in India in 2023, a 9.5% rise from the previous year. Of them, nearly 10% could not be traced.

In Karnataka, 14,878 children went missing between 2020 and July 2025. This data presented by Home Minister G Parameshwara, in a written reply to the Legislative Council recently, highlighted three worrying trends — the number of missing children is rising each year, more teenage girls go missing than boys and the proportion of untraced children, especially girls, remains alarmingly high.

While the government data does not specify the reasons for children going missing, activists, psychologists and child rights experts say poverty, family abuse, emotional neglect at home, social discrimination, parental alcoholism and orphanhood are that major reasons that push children to run away from home.

The growing influence of social media is another major factor that is shaping adolescent decisions. Sharing their experiences of dealing with runaway children, several experts told *DH* that more than half of the runaway girls aged 15 to 17 had done so to meet the boys they befriended online. In most cases, these boys were above 18.

Madhumati Hebballi, Superintendent of the Children's Home for Girls in Hubballi, says her institute receives at least five to eight girls aged 15 to 17 every month. "During adolescence, when children fail to receive love at home, they often seek it elsewhere," she explains.

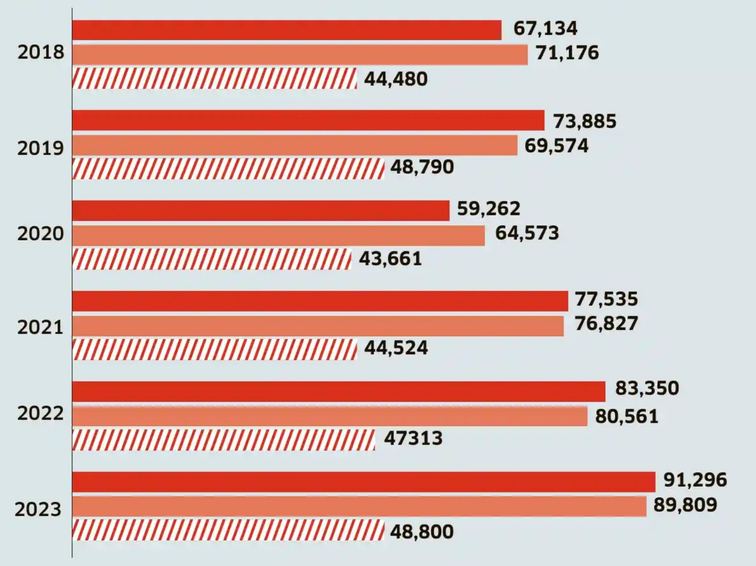
Awareness and education, not just for children but also for parents, is what she advocates to prevent emotional disconnect within families.

Highlighting the gravity of the issue, Karnataka High Court judges S G Pandit and C M Poonacha, while hearing a habeas corpus petition on October 13, 2025, related to a missing girl from Hubballi, observed: "The disappearance of a woman or child cannot be reduced to mere statistics in police records. Each missing person represents a family's agony and the State's solemn duty to protect life and liberty under Article 21."

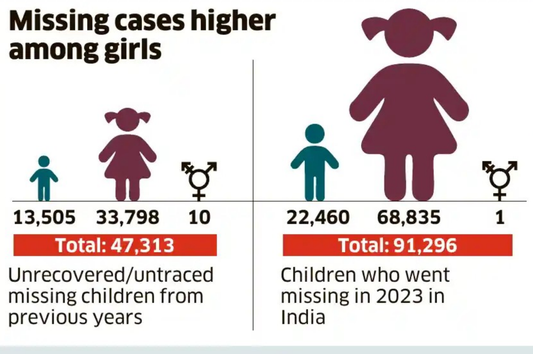
THE MISSING LINKS

- One child goes missing in India every eight minutes
- Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Delhi top the chart of missing children
- In 2023, an average of 486 crimes were committed against children in India daily, marking a 9.16% increase compared to 2022
- Children who have run away, abandoned, kidnapped, lost and trafficked are considered missing

AROUND 10% CHILDREN REMAIN UNTRACKED



Missing cases higher among girls



VULNERABLE TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Kidnapping and abduction of children witnessed the maximum number of cases in 2023
- Nearly 1.14 lakh cases of kidnapping and abduction were reported in 2023 in India, showing an increase of 5.6% over 2022
- In 2023, 1,619 minor boys and 961 minor girls were rescued from human trafficking
- Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan reported a significant increase in the number of children deemed as kidnapped in 2022 when compared to 2017

Children deemed as kidnapped

South, central Karnataka report maximum cases

- Karnataka reported 3,421 cases of missing children in 2024
- Bengaluru city, Mandya, Shivamogga, Davangere, Tumakuru and Mysuru have reported a high number of cases in the last five years
- Over 95% of missing children have been traced since 2020
- 634 accused were arrested in child kidnap cases between 2020 and 2025 July

Cases more than double in five years in Karnataka

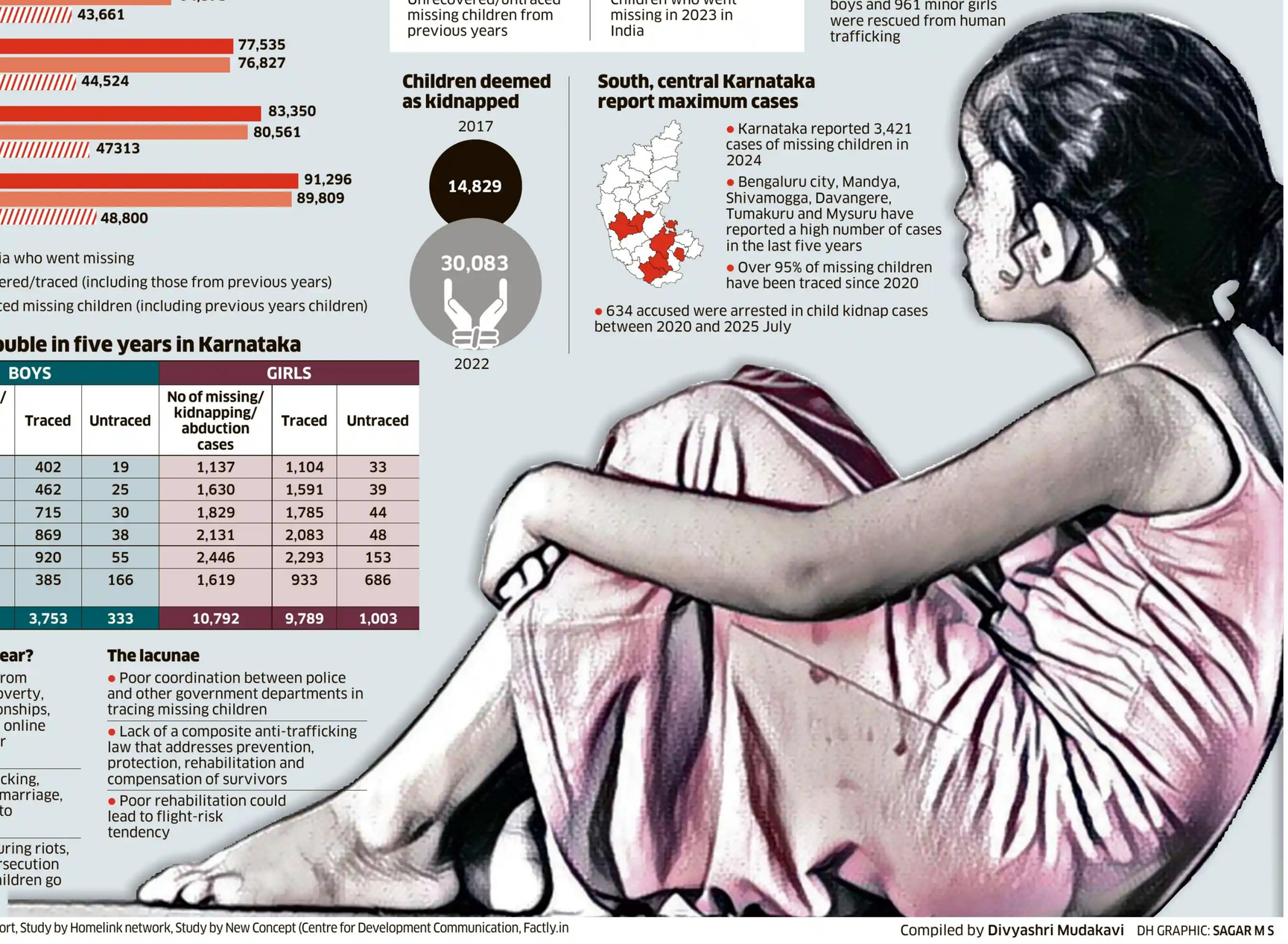
Year	BOYS			GIRLS		
	No of missing/ kidnapping/ abduction cases	Traced	Untraced	No of missing/ kidnapping/ abduction cases	Traced	Untraced
2020	421	402	19	1,137	1,104	33
2021	487	462	25	1,630	1,591	39
2022	745	715	30	1,829	1,785	44
2023	907	869	38	2,131	2,083	48
2024	975	920	55	2,446	2,293	153
2025 (Up to July)	551	385	166	1,619	933	686
Total	**4,086**	**3,753**	**333**	**10,792**	**9,789**	**1,003**

Why do children disappear?

- Many children run away from home due to reasons like poverty, family conflicts, love relationships, peer pressure, study stress, online exploitation and a desire for independence
- Child labour, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, personal enmity also leads to kidnapping of children
- Separation from family during riots, disasters, civil unrest or persecution are another reasons why children go missing

The lacunae

- Poor coordination between police and other government departments in tracing missing children
- Lack of a composite anti-trafficking law that addresses prevention, protection, rehabilitation and compensation of survivors
- Poor rehabilitation could lead to flight-risk tendency



Source: Digital Sansad, NCRB Crime report, Study by Homelink network, Study by New Concept (Centre for Development Communication, Factly.in

Compiled by **Divyashri Mudakavi** DH GRAPHIC: **SAGAR M S**

Trafficking, a hidden current

In 2023, nearly 1.13 lakh people were kidnapped or abducted in India, of whom 82,106 were children. The same year, Karnataka reported 3,133 kidnapping cases, placing it among the top seven states for such incidents.

Of the 397 child trafficking cases reported nationally, only three were officially recorded in the state. Experts acknowledge that while child trafficking may be lower here compared to north Indian states, it is unlikely that only three children were trafficked in a year.

"Official data suggests that cases of kidnapping and child trafficking for labour are low in Karnataka. But this is hard to believe, as many districts in North Karnataka witness significant labour migration and the state does not maintain comprehensive data on vulnerable children," says M L Parashuram, co-founder of the Mysuru-based Odanadi Seva Trust, which is involved in rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficked and sexually exploited women and children.

He recounts rescuing a 14-year-old tribal girl from Old Mysuru region trafficked multiple times to Madikeri, Mumbai and Bengaluru after her father's death during the Covid pandemic and exploited sexually. "When exploitation happens in silence, data becomes meaningless," he says. The survivor has now written a letter to the President of India, requesting justice for her.

He said that there are at least five agencies—Child Rights committee, Child Welfare Committee, District Child Protection Units, Juvenile Justice committee, Junior Police Wing — that are working for the protection of children, yet the system is unable to prevent missing child issues.

Over the past five years, Karnataka police have arrested 634 people for illegally transporting or kidnapping children in the state.

Vasudeva Sharma N V, executive director of Child Rights Trust, says, "Most of the children are driven away or lured to work as domestic help, labourers in hotels and construction sites, and some are exploited as sex workers. Unfortunately, a majority of these cases never come to light, as many parents do not report missing children," he says.

Data shows that southern districts such as Bengaluru (urban and rural), Tumakuru, Mandya, Mysuru, Chitradurga and Davangere report a higher number of missing children cases compared to the northern districts. Vasudeva noted that one reason for the higher numbers could be that rescued children were brought to these districts, leading to cases being registered there.

India had pledged to eliminate child labour by 2025 and has over ten laws to protect children's rights. However, experts argue that the country lacks a comprehensive anti-trafficking law addressing prevention, protection and rehabilitation.

Many times, rescued children are pushed back into another exploitative sector, perpetuating the cycle of vulnerability.

Preventive measures

Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) member Thippeswamy K T says that while we are aware of children going missing, preventive measures remain weak. "Unless we use collected data for scientific analysis to understand why children go missing, we may never prevent such cases," he says.

Vasudeva Sharma acknowledges the efforts of multiple agencies in tracing and reuniting missing children with their families. However, he cautions that despite these successes, the government is still "reacting to the situation rather than taking proactive measures to prevent such cases."

Thippeswamy says that without understanding why children run away from home, the government cannot devise an effective mechanism to prevent it. "We need focused interventions and coordinated efforts across departments — health, education, police, women and child welfare, and others — to address the root causes." He adds that it is crucial to create forums where children can freely express their fears, emotions and concerns, while also raising awareness about the harsh realities and consequences of running away from home.

Both echoed the concern that reuniting runaway children with their parents after counseling does not fully solve the problem if the underlying circumstances remain unchanged.

Vasudeva Sharma suggests that the government addresses multiple fronts to prevent children from running away. "A crucial step, especially in rural areas, is ensuring regular school attendance. Teachers should actively counsel and interact with children facing issues at home," he said.

He adds that the government needs to strengthen the Women and Child Protection Department and standardise reporting through the beat police system to improve monitoring on the ground. NGOs, in coordination with government agencies, should conduct parenting workshops to help parents understand and address the interests and concerns of their children, especially adolescents.

Anjali Ramanna, chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee, Bengaluru, and author of *Magalu Odi Hogidalle*, emphasises that the most important need for a child in a family is acceptance. "No matter how many times the system reunites a child with their parents, the flight-risk nature of the child will persist if the parents do not accept them as they are."

She notes that many eloped girls are unaware of safe and unsafe relationships and advocates for a more comprehensive approach to sex education in schools.

The role of society is crucial in rehabilitating such children, as any provocation or harassment can push these emotionally vulnerable children towards extreme actions, she adds.

Experts also stress the need for timely reporting and accurate information to trace missing children.

Inspector General of Police, Eastern Range, B R Ravikanthe Gowda, says the department treats cases of missing children seriously, registering all such cases as kidnapping to ensure speedy tracking.

"The biggest challenge is tracing children of migrant families, as they often lack a permanent address," he explains.

"When we rescue a child, they may not be able to provide complete details of their parents. Migrant labourers also often do not have recent photographs of their children, which makes tracking difficult."

Gowda adds that the department is not only rescuing children from begging but also targeting the gangs that exploit them. He notes that each police range in Karnataka has a committee, headed by a senior police officer, that regularly reviews missing children's cases and coordinates with other ranges. "Data shows that we have been able to rescue nearly 90% of the missing children in the state," Gowda adds.

*(*Names have been changed to protect identity)*

Rescue efforts falter as NGOs step back from child protection

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Strengthening institutional support is critical to effective handling of cases related to missing children. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been playing a crucial role in the implementation of government programmes in rescue, rehabilitation and counseling of missing children.

M L Parashuram, co-founder of Mysuru's Odanadi Seva Samsthe, which is actively combating child trafficking in Karnataka, says the diminished presence of NGOs over the last decade has significantly affected child protection initiatives.

"With the Union government tightening the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), several NGOs working in the child rights sector have shut down," he says. He adds that the shift of NGO responsibilities to state agencies has had a cascading impact.

The worst affected from this development are smaller NGOs working at the grassroots level.

Ramu Jogihalli, founder of the Nelamangala-based NGO, Nemadhi, says over the last eight years, his organisation has been struggling to stay afloat as both government and CSR funds have reduced. "Earlier, I used to operate a Child helpline and rescue children in distress. Since 2017, my NGO has not received both foreign and government funds," he says.

Now the child helpline is run by the state women and child development department. Limited staff at the helpline is impacting rescue of children in distress, Ramu adds.

Parushuram highlights issues within the government-run child rescue homes, "Staff shortages, particularly of counsellors, have led some children to run away even from these facilities," he said.

Caste census, from Page1

'Interpret those results that can be expected to have a higher degree of accuracy'

It would be much more scientific to let the data emerge as it will but interpret only those results that can be expected to have a higher degree of accuracy.

Such an interpretation would be sceptical about the results that could be distorted by the inadequate training of enumerators. The credibility of data on questions where the enumerators tended to transfer the features of the head of a household to all its members would be limited. This was not true of all intrahousehold data. The enumerators have not treated the education of individual members of a household as being identical to that of the head of the household. The data can then be used to capture gender differences in education levels within the household. There is thus a need for discretion in deciding which intrahousehold data to use, rather than a complete acceptance, or total rejection, of all data about conditions within a house.

Beyond the difficulty with inadequately trained enumerators, not all the questions that were asked were designed to receive accurate responses. Even with the best of intentions, it is unlikely that respondents would have provided an accurate estimate of household income. Calculating the entire income of a person from multiple sources, from a job to bank deposits, is a time-consuming exercise which neither the enumerator nor the respondent typically had time for. There is also a tendency to underreport income in surveys where respondents believe they would benefit from reporting lower incomes. This risk is compounded in surveys like the present one where communities would like to present themselves as more backward and there has been an organised effort to tell their members how they should respond. There is thus a case to ignore income data generated by the survey.

Economic status

It is fortunately possible to get a better sense of the economic status of a household through the questions on assets. There is a fairly detailed list of both movable and immovable assets in the questionnaire. Attributing accurate economic values to these assets will be a challenge. The pucca house that is reported could be a one-room structure in a poorer part of the state or a palatial building in an expensive part of Bengaluru. What can be done, though, is to define levels of households. A household that owns a car is likely to be better off than one that owns only a two-wheeler which, in turn, is likely to be better off than one that owns only a cycle. It is then possible to develop an indicator of the distance of the household from absolute deprivation. A well-defined indicator of this distance would be more useful in determining levels of backwardness than going by the response to the question on income.

The rebellion of the privileged could also be countered by focusing on the information that is provided by the refusal to participate in the survey. The refusal of a sitting Rajya Sabha member to participate on the grounds that her family is not backward is itself a statement of economic status. The spatial pattern of those refusing to participate strengthens the view that the refusal is predominantly by those who consider themselves to be the elite. A large concentration of refusals to participate is in Bengaluru, and Bengaluru urban accounts for nearly 40% of the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). The pattern of refusal is evidence of the urgent need to examine regional inequalities in the state not just in terms of backward regions but also in terms of the excessive dependence of Karnataka's economy on a single district.

The information provided in the survey, including the refusal to participate, can be useful in understanding the dynamics of backwardness in Karnataka, as long as we interpret the results in a way that allows us to hear all that the data is telling us, not more and not less.

(Narendar Pani is JRD Tata Chair Visiting Professor at National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru)

FUELLING THE FLAMES

- Bus was carrying consignment of around 300 smartphones to Bengaluru in luggage cabin
- Flames caused due to friction from bike dragged under bus engulfed the luggage cabin
- Due to the rising heat, the batteries in phones might have exploded, causing the fire to spread to the passenger compartment
- Battery experts say lithium-ion batteries contain volatile, flammable electrolytes that can ignite under extreme heat

Smartphone cargo may have exploded in Kurnool bus fire

Mobiles with volatile batteries kept in luggage cabin under passenger section

S N V SUDHIR
CHINNATEKUR (KURNOOL), DHNS

The smartphones in the luggage cabin. DH PHOTO/ S N V SUDHIR

As forensic experts began examining the charred wreckage of the private sleeper bus that went up in flames on the Kurnool highway on Friday killing 19 passengers, chilling new details of the accident surfaced on Saturday.

The bus was found to be carrying in its luggage cabin a consignment of around 300 smartphones worth an estimated Rs 46 lakh, being transported to Bengaluru for a leading e-commerce company by Hyderabad-based businessman K Manganath.

Forensic teams with whom *DH* interacted now believe that exploding lithium-ion batteries in the smartphones may have intensified the blaze, turning it into a deadly inferno. Battery experts noted that lithium-ion batteries contain volatile, flammable electrolytes that can ignite under extreme heat.

Probe teams found that the bike involved in the initial crash had got lodged under the bus as it moved forward, dragging it for some distance. Sparks generated during the drag, coupled with leaking petrol, led to the blaze. The flames engulfed the luggage cabin, where the smartphone shipment was kept.

Due to the rising heat, the batteries might have exploded simultaneously, causing the fire to spread rapidly into the passenger compartment above. Most passengers seated in berths directly above the luggage area had no time to escape.

Several bodies were found stuck in the narrow passageways between berths, with rescue teams describing horrifying scenes of remains fused together by the flames.

One body was found halfway through a window, suggesting the victim collapsed from suffocation and heat while trying to jump out. Forensic officers confirmed that most victims were seated in the front section of the bus, directly above the luggage bay where the fire first erupted.

During the blaze, a woman named Anusha, wife of Golla Ramesh who also perished, appeared to have tried desperately to save her daughter.

▸ Kurnool, Page 7

Biker fell, died before bus dragged vehicle

In a twist to the Kurnool bus tragedy, it has now emerged that Siva Sankar, whose bike triggered the inferno that killed 19 passengers on Friday, had skidded and died before the bus dragged his vehicle.
Details on Page 9

'Will crack down on buses carrying cargo'

With reports stating that 300 smartphones in the cargo cabin intensified the Kurnool bus fire, the spotlight is now on lapses involved in the transportation of goods by private operators, said Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy.
Details on Page 7

Made investments after due diligence: LIC amid Adani storm

NEW DELHI, PTI: Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) on Saturday said its investments in Adani group companies have been made independently and in accordance with its board-approved policies, following detailed due diligence.

"Department of Financial Services (in the Union Finance Ministry) or any other body does not have any role in such (investment) decisions," LIC said in a statement posted on X.

India's largest insurer has, over the years, made investment decisions across companies based on fundamentals and detailed due diligence. Its investment value in India's top 500 companies has grown 10-fold since 2014 — from Rs 1.56 lakh crore to Rs 15.6 lakh crore — reflecting strong fund management.

"The investment decisions are taken by LIC independently as per Board-approved policies after detailed due diligence," LIC said.

"LIC has ensured the highest standards of due diligence and all its investment decisions have been undertaken in compliance with extant policies, provisions in the Acts and regulatory guidelines, in the best interest of all its stakeholders."

The statement was in response to a report in The Washington Post.

▸ LIC, Page 7

Allegation and LIC response

- Washington Post claimed officials orchestrated a plan to steer LIC into investing in Adani group earlier this year, when conglomerate was facing a debt pile and scrutiny in the US
- The report highlighted LIC's May 2025 investment of $570 million in Adani Ports & SEZ (APSEZ), which holds the highest 'AAA' credit rating in India
- LIC said the Department of Financial Services or any other body does not have any role in its investment decisions

DKS dismisses tunnel critics, calls Surya 'empty vessel'

Says committed to infra projects despite opposition

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday launched a counter-attack on the critics of state government's infrastructure initiatives in Bengaluru, particularly the tunnel road project, dismissing Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya's opposition to the ambitious plan as politically motivated and branding the BJP leader an "empty vessel".

Speaking to the media after an interaction with residents of Bharat Nagar, Herohalli (Yeshwantpur constituency), at Gandhi Park, during the 'Walk with Bengaluru' programme, Shivakumar defended the proposed 117-km Bengaluru Business Corridor and the tunnel road, asserting his commitment to execution of these projects despite numerous Public Interest Litigations (PILs) and political obstacles.

"Let anyone oppose anything. I am least bothered. They don't want the government to flourish. The tunnel will be dug inside the earth. It cannot be done outside. We are not acquiring any land for this project. A small stretch passes through Lalbagh. It won't affect Lalbagh in any way. If there is a problem, we will make necessary changes," the DyCM stated, referring to similar tunnel projects in Mumbai and Delhi.

Reacting to Surya's criticism of the tunnel road project, Shivakumar termed him an "empty vessel" and challenged him to provide an alternative to solve Bengaluru's gridlock. He also dismissed the allegation that the project is meant for the rich.

▸ DKS-tunnel road, Page 7

> The project is going to be a toll road. If he (Surya) doesn't want the tunnel road project, he should suggest an alternative. He has not been able to bring even a grant of Rs 10 for the city. Why did their government not try to address traffic issues?...
>
> **DK Shivakumar,** DyCM

HC seeks govt reply on tree felling

The Karnataka High Court on Saturday asked the state government to inform by Tuesday as to whether there is any proposal to fell trees inside the Lalbagh Botanical Garden for the proposed tunnel road project. P4

Ready to quit, says KBG, hints at Cabinet rejig

BENGALURU DHNS: Amid buzz over a power-sharing deal within the Congress and a Cabinet reshuffle, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Saturday declared that he was ready to quit the minister's post "if the high command demands it".

Speaking to reporters, Krishna Byre Gowda gave a hint about a November reshuffle and said, "Induction of new ministers and Cabinet reshuffle after two and a half years was decided during the formation of the government itself."

Details on Page 6

40 docs let go, Bidar govt hospital in ICU

DH SPECIAL

NRUPATHUNGA S K
DAVANGERE, DHNS

Health services at the Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences & Teaching Hospital (BRIMS), a major general hospitals in Kalyana Karnataka region, are likely to be hit as over 40 doctors appointed on contract basis were relieved of their duties on Saturday due to a funds crunch.

BRIMS owes each of these doctors, hired around eight years ago, lakhs of rupees as their salaries have been overdue for over seven to eight months. Services at many departments, including radiology, may be hit, leaving patients in the lurch.

One of the doctors told *DH* on condition of anonymity that around 40 doctors, many of them with MD and MS degrees, were relieved of their duties without prior intimation.

Some of them received an email in this regard. "We had been serving at BRIMS for the past five to six years. We were not paid on time and each of us is yet to get salary of seven to eight months amounting to Rs 5 lakh. The sudden decision has not only put us in a fix but will leave patients depending on the general hospital in the lurch."

He said that of the three doctors in the radiology department, two of them had been relieved. With this, the CT and MRI scanning facilities will be disrupted, forcing poor patients to pay exorbitant fees at private medical centres for these services. Patients from various parts of Bidar and neighbouring Telangana and Andhra Pradesh also visit the 750-bed hospital.

Speaking to *DH*, BRIMS director Shivkumar Shetkar admitted that the contract-based doctors were not paid for seven to eight months.

▸ Govt hospital, Page 7

Most docs on contract

Of the 250 sanctioned posts for doctors, only around 100 are permanent. BRIMS had listed contract doctors as its own staff to get permission from National Medical Commission to increase its intake and to start additional PG courses. But now, it is facing a staff crunch.

UGLY INCIDENT

2 Australian women cricketers molested in Indore, suspect held

INDORE, PTI

Two Australian women cricketers, taking part in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, were allegedly stalked, and one of them was molested by a motorcycle-borne man in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, police said on Saturday.

The police on Friday arrested the man involved in the incident that occurred on Thursday, an official said.

Sub-inspector Nidhi Raghuvanshi said the two cricketers had stepped out of their hotel and were walking towards a café when a man on a motorcycle started following them.

He allegedly touched one of them inappropriately and rode off, she said.

According to the FIR, the duo contacted their team security officer, Danny Simmons, and shared their live location with him, and he then passed it on to the local security liaison officer.

Based on this, the police reached the spot immediately, the FIR stated.

On getting information, assistant commissioner of police Himani Mishra met the two players, recorded their statements and registered a first information report under section 74 (use of criminal force to outrage a woman's modesty) and 78 (stalking) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the MIG police station.

Raghuvanshi said that a bystander noted the suspect's motorcycle number, based on which the accused, Akil Khan, was apprehended.

"Khan has prior criminal cases registered against him, and an investigation is on in the case," she added.

The Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association said it was deeply pained and shocked by the disturbing incident of misconduct and inappropriate behaviour with the two players.

▸ Cricketers, Page7

PROMPT ACTION

- Man on a motorcycle follows cricketers walking towards café
- He allegedly touches one of them inappropriately and rides off
- The duo shares their live location with team security officer, who passes it on to the local officer
- Bystander notes suspect's motorcycle number, based on which he is apprehended

Sabarimala heist case: SIT seizes gold from Ballari & Bengaluru

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple gold heist case has reportedly seized gold from a jewellery store owner from Ballari and from the key accused's residence in Bengaluru.

Around 400 grams of gold was reportedly recovered from Govardhan who runs Roddam Jewels in Ballari. The SIT also seized 170 grams of gold from the residence of key accused Unnikrishnan Potti in Bengaluru's Srirampuram on Saturday. Potti was arrested on October 16 and is in SIT custody.

The SIT carried out searches with the help of the Karnataka police. Sources said the seized gold, which include ornaments, bars and coins, need to be subjected to scientific examination to determine whether they are the same metal looted from the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple's gold platings.

▸ Sabarimala, Page 7

CASH COW? Fee too steep, say some; others think it encourages 'illegal layouts'

Khata conversion: 'Deepavali gift' no guarantee of bright future

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

When the government launched the scheme to convert 'B' khata plots to 'A' khata in Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) limits, it described the much-awaited initiative as a 'Deepavali gift'.

But this gift comes at a steep price — not in thousands, but in lakhs. Reason: the government has fixed 5% of the property's guidance value as the conversion fee. The scheme is optional, yet for many unaffordable.

Guidance value in Bengaluru ranges from about Rs 5,000 per sq ft to over Rs 20,000 depending on the location and road width. For instance, a 30x40 sq ft plot in Mahadevapura — with a guidance value of Rs 7,500 — would require a payment of nearly Rs 4.5 lakh to upgrade from 'B' khata to 'A' khata.

As per official records, there are about 7.5 lakh 'B' khata properties under GBA, spread across five city corporations. Officials believe another 7.5 lakh properties are yet to be brought under the tax net.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar has called the scheme the government's 'sixth guarantee'.

It is, however, projected to generate a conservative revenue of Rs 5,000 crore without any additional expenditure, unlike other guarantee schemes.

The offer, however, applies only to vacant plots or single-owner buildings, not individual flats or multi-storey apartments. More importantly, properties with an 'e-Khata' can apply.

Mixed reactions

Reactions among property owners are divided. Some call it a long-overdue reform, while others say the 5% fee is too steep.

Thomas Varkey, a resident of Horamavu-Agara, said he isn't keen on applying.

"When Akrama Sakrama was introduced in 2008, the betterment charge was only Rs 30,000 and even that was unaffordable for many. Eventually, the initiative was stayed by the Supreme Court. As per the new scheme, I'll have to pay Rs 3.5 lakh for the 'A' khata. I see no reason to pay now since I'm not selling the property," he said, adding the fee should be reduced to 2%.

He is in favour of the scheme as it may bring some sanity in building construction, given that 'B' khata properties are not eligible for building sanction plans so far, Varkey said, but questioned how the funds collected under the scheme will be used.

"If this is for development, what have they done with the money already collected as property tax? Roads in Babusapalya are pathetic. Cauvery water hasn't reached most houses in the locality, and there are no parks," he said.

Others, however, welcome the move. "We've been waiting for this for 20 years," said Vinod Reddy of Mahadevapura.

"Everyone wants clear property records especially if it's their only plot. A 'B' khata property worth Rs 3 crore fetches only Rs 30 lakh in loans. Owning an 'A' khata site is like owning a BDA plot," he said.

A senior GBA official said the response had been encouraging.

Many residents think that the new scheme may increase land value for owners, but it won't fix the lack of roads, drainage and other shortcomings. PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

"We've received over 25,000 visitors to the portal and 500 applications so far," the official said, adding that inspections will begin on November 1.

Wrong precedent

Most 'B' khata plots are situated in the city's peripheral areas like KR Puram, Mahadevapura and Bommanahalli.

An approved layout is required to reserve 5% of its area for civic amenities, 10% for parks, and at least 22% for roads.

The land is then handed over to the government. For comparison, Banaswadi, developed by BDA, has nine parks while Babusapalya, with mostly revenue or unapproved layouts, has none. Both these neighborhoods are situated on either side of the ring road.

"While the conversion will increase land value, it won't fix the absence of roads, drainage and civic amenities," said a city-based builder.

"First, the government lets unauthorised layouts thrive and now rewards them," he said.

Developers like Errol Fernandes, CMD of Ferns Estates and Developers, believe a one-time settlement is inevitable.

"The damage is already done — government can't demolish homes now. The focus should be on using this revenue to widen roads and create parks, even if that means acquiring vacant land," he said.

There is also a fear that unauthorised development of layouts will continue in future.

This is because the government is making it easier to break rules than comply with, industry veterans said.

What's more, the scheme is being made applicable even to plots larger than half an acre, not just small sites of 20x30 or 40x60 sq ft.

A town planning expert said the government should perform the job of a regulatory body and not a revenue generating entity.

"If the government wants revenue, it should strengthen enterprises like Mysore Sandal Soap factory, not regularise illegal plots. This will only contribute to Bengaluru's decay," he said.

The scheme, he added, may benefit a few property owners, but the public in general will be the losers.

"The government keeps talking about development, but what's the use if people live without basic infrastructure?," he said.

"It's like having grand interiors in a house surrounded by slums," the expert said.

Mallathahalli Lake encroachment: DKS orders swift action

Deputy CM vows to address pressing issues of West B'luru

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who holds the Bengaluru Urban Development portfolio, on Saturday ordered a swift and 'merciless' crackdown against those who have encroached land in and around Mallathahalli Lake after citizens brought the issue to his attention during the 'Walk with Bengaluru' programme at Gandhi Park in Bharat Nagar, which falls under the Yeshwantpur Assembly constituency.

Accompanied by Yeshwantpur MLA S T Somashekar and Greater Bengaluru Authority Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao, the Deputy CM spent the morning lending an ear to the residents' grievances.

Shivakumar wasted no time in issuing instructions to the officials after Ramesh Gowda, a resident, said that nearly an acre had been encroached upon, and illegal shelters constructed near the lake. "Mercilessly vacate the encroachers within a week," the CM told the officials.

Problems with poor or lack of public transport services, and the state of the local infrastructure constituted a majority of the complaints that fell on the Deputy CM's ears. Deepa, a resident of Bharat Nagar Second Phase, said that infrequent service of BMTC buses meant having to travel on board overcrowded buses.

Citizens demanded feeder buses to ensure last-mile connectivity to the nearest Metro stations, insisting on facilities on a par with upscale tech-hub areas such as HSR Layout. The deplorable condition of the Dwarakavasa Road, repeatedly dug up for utility lines, was another key point of contention.

Responding to requests for improving sports infrastructure, Shivakumar acknowledged the need for a running track, shuttle court, and volleyball court in the locality. Other issues raised by the residents included problems with garbage, lack of parks, gyms, toilets, police issues, defunct LED lights, bus stands, delay in road-widening work, polluted water, BDA plot handover issues, and encroachment by street vendors.

"If a road needs to be widened, there is its own law. We will pay attention to this. We will also pay attention to all your issues," he assured.

DKS extends public grievance window

"Those who were not able to reach me during the programme, they can all come and attend the programme at Cubbon Park on October 26. I will accept applications from 7am to 10am," he said, clarifying that people from all five municipal corporations of Bengaluru could attend the event.

Additionally, he pointed to the existing mechanism for grievance redressal, urging the public to register complaints by calling 1533, given that a dedicated team had been assigned to attend to plaints on the helpline.

"We have formed GBA with the aim of providing you with good governance and solving your problems," he said, while noting that some areas are being identified for integration into the GBA following upcoming elections. He also mentioned that the government is formalising a system for continuous public grievance hearing meetings in the coming days.

The event, however, triggered gridlock in the vicinity all along the Mysore Road flyover all the way till Deepanjali Nagar.

Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Urban Development Minister D K Shivakumar interacts with residents during the 'Walk with Bengaluru' programme on Saturday.

Woman murdered, body dumped in auto

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 35-year-old domestic help was found murdered in an auto parked near Tilak Nagar police station on Saturday. The assailants murdered her with a blunt weapon in some other place and dumped the body inside the parked auto, it is said.

The deceased has been identified as Salma, a widow who was living with four children at BTB colony in Bairasandra ward. Her husband Firoz Khan had passed away a few years ago as he was addicted to liqour.

A senior police officer said that the incident came to light when passersby noticed the body and alerted Salma's mother Parvin Taz, who then alerted the Tilak Nagar police.

Salma had head injuries and the body was shifted to Victoria Hospital for post mortem. The motive for the murder is yet to be ascertained. CCTV footage has been obtained to trace the suspects. "The victim's mother alleged that Subramani, with whom Salma had an illicit affair, is one of the suspects. His accomplice Senthil helped him wrap the body in cloth and dump it in the auto. Based on her complaint, we are looking out for the accused who are absconding," the police said.

JD(S) coordination committee set up for corporation polls

BENGALURU, DHNS: Janata Dal (S) on Saturday announced the formation of a coordination committee to strategise for the upcoming Greater Bengaluru municipal corporation elections.

The committee includes senior MLAs and Legislative Council members, such as Arakalgud MLA A Manju, Turuvekere MLA M T Krishnappa, T A Sharavana, T N Javarayigowda, Youth Janata Dal State President Nikhil Kumaraswamy, former Deputy Speaker M Krishnareddy, and former Legislative Council member K A Tippeswamy.

In a statement, JD(S) state president HD Kumaraswamy said: "To strengthen the party and organisation ahead of elections to the five new municipal corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority, the committee has been formed."

The responsibilities of the coordination committee include conducting party membership drives across each corporation's limit; organising ward-wise meetings of party workers and leaders; preparing a list of probable candidates based on leadership, capability, and interest of aspirants to be submitted to the party's state office and formulating coordination and election strategies, including alliances with the NDA parties, for the upcoming elections.

Experts debate challenges in developing sense of self amidst 'screen addiction'

BENGALURU, DHNS

A week-long event focusing on the future of digital India and the impact of technology kicked off, with a public lecture on screen addiction and the impact of the same on youth, at the Bangalore International Centre in Domlur, on Saturday.

Titled, 'Our Digital Futures Fest' and organised by IT for Change, a Bengaluru-based non-profit working on research and advocacy in the field of digital justice, it is being held as part of the organisation's 25-year celebration.

The fest opened with a lecture by Dr Shekhar Seshadri, popular child and adolescent psychiatrist, currently a professor (health) at Azim Premji Foundation. The talk focused on the relation between the self and the algorithm.

Dr Sheshadri questioned what it truly means to develop a sense of self in today's world that is characterised by the use of social media and streaming platforms.

Speaking about how the viewer isn't in control of what is being presented to them, he said, "We now have a phenomenon where OTT platforms are deliberately dumbing down content to be served in the form of second-screen viewing. This basically acknowledges that people no longer possess the ability to watch a movie without using their phones," he elaborated, adding that "the digital screen is no longer a passive windo,w but an active participant in the construction of ourselves".

Underlining the significance of Our Digital Futures Fest in the context of Digital India's growth, Anita Gurumurthy, executive director, IT For Change, said: "Digital is central to the very imagination of the 21st century India. A People's Digital India hinges on how our institutions respond to emerging challenges and developments in our collective digital existence towards a social fabric of belonging and care". For details about the fest, visit it-forchange.net.

Stepfather smothers 7-year-old girl to death

BENGALURU, DHNS: A seven-year-old girl was allegedly smothered to death by her stepfather at their house in Kumbalagodu on Friday.

The accused, identified as Darshan (30), an employee at a retail marketplace, is currently absconding.

The deceased has been identified as Siri, the daughter of Shilpa, who was separated from her husband a few years ago and was living in Kannika Layout in Kumbalagodu.

According to police, Shilpa alleged that Darshan frequently punished the child for not behaving politely at home and was also stubborn. Upset over her behaviour, he allegedly assaulted and smothered her to death.

The mother, who works in an exterior design company, had gone to work when the incident occurred. Around 5.30 pm, she returned home and Darshan tried to pull her out. Then, she found her daughter lying motionless and started screaming. She alerted her neighbours, who called 112 to inform the police.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Shilpa met Darshan on a social media platform about five months ago and the duo married recently. Efforts are on to nab Darshan, who is said to have escaped to his native place in Tumakuru district.

TV actress booked for blackmailing elderly woman

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Tilaknagar police have booked a TV serial actress for allegedly blackmailing a woman.

According to the police, the suspect Asha Jois befriended the victim, 61, from Jayanagar, who was also her neighbour, and claimed to be a TV serial actress. The victim alleged that Asha got close to her and learnt about her marriage to the owner of the company where she previously worked as an accounts manager. It is alleged that Asha then blackmailed the victim to get Rs 2 crore from her husband, the company owner, after slowly gaining her trust.

When she denied, some photographs and voice records of the victim were shared with her relatives and friends, the FIR noted. An investigation is underway.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

South India Electricity Consumers' Conference: Swapan Ghosh, M G Devasahayam, Vadde Sobhanadriswara Rao, S Gandhi to be present: All India Electricity Users Association; Gandhi Bhavan, Near Shivananda Circle; 10.30 am

'RSS 100' Lecture: Ram Madhav, Chair: T S Nagabharana; Manthan; Soundarya College Auditorium, Hesaraghatta Road, Dasarahalli; 10.30 am

Release of five books: Jayanth Kaikini's 'Ankada Parade,' 'Sevanti Prasanga,' Su Rudramurthy Shastri's 'Bhatti Vikramadityana Kathegalu,' Sumangala's 'Ennatma Kampamidu,' by Rashmi S. His book launch 'Oorembo Oorali': Achyuta Kumar, Sandhyarani: Ankita Pustaka: Suchitra Hall, Banashankari 2nd Phase; 10.30 am

Pratibha Puraskar and Book Release: Immadi Siddarameshwara Swami, M Veerappa Moily, Book Release: Shivaraj Tangadagi: Karnataka State Bhovi (Vaddara) Sangha; Karnataka State Government Employees' Hall, Cubbon Park; 10 am

CULTURAL

'SVR@50' Achievement, Celebration, Film Festival: 'Mutthinahara' Film Screening at 10.30 am, 'Nagarahole' Film Screening at 2.30 pm: Kannada Film Chamber of Commerce, Dr Rajkumar Bhavan, Karnataka Artistes' Association, Chamarajpet.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with light rain

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	29.0°C
Minimum	20.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	87%
Sunset (Oct 26)	5:56 pm
Sunrise (Oct 27)	6:12 am
Moonrise	9:10 am
Moonset	8:37 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

ON FESTIVAL LEAVE

Post-Deepavali, pourakarmikas' shortage leaves streets strewn with waste

Unexploded crackers in garbage can go off unexpectedly, leading to injuries for pourakarmikas that usually go unreported. DH FILE PHOTO

SHRADDHA A K
BENGALURU, DHNS

Post Deepavali, many roads across Bengaluru are strewn with cracker debris, paper and burnt fuses following Deepavali celebrations.

Usually, pourakarmikas are pressed into service for a clean-up drive post Deepavali. But this year, shortage of manpower has been cited as the reason for accumulated paper waste.

Festival leave

A *DH* reality check showed that many pourakarmikas had taken leave for the festival, leading to unkempt streets.

Areas such as RR Nagar, Rajajinagar, Jayanagar, Ulsoor, and KR Market are strewn with cracker waste, worsened by rain. These small papers also block drains.

Maitreyei, an activist from the Pourakarmika Sangha, pointed out that the sanitation workers often lack proper gear for safely clearing cracker debris.

She said risks are compounded when unexploded crackers go off unexpectedly, which can lead to injuries that go unreported. She said unreported injuries could also be a reason for the low attendance of workers.

Harini Raghavan, co-founder of Public Health Action (PACT), said pourakarmikas treat cracker debris like regular waste, with no standard operating procedure (SOP) or training for safe removal.

She urged the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) to collaborate with local authorities to develop and implement a clear protocol for handling such waste.

Soaking in water

In response to safety concerns raised, a senior KSPCB official said a method of soaking the debris with water to prevent accidental explosions due to heat is good to explore.

This would allow for safer transport to disposal facilities in the absence of an established SOP.

However, several areas of the city did see cleaner streets. Raju Rajanna, a local contractor for recruiting the workers, said his team was equipped with gloves and safety goggles to minimise the risk of injuries.

In places like Hennur, Yelahanka, Sahakarnagar and JP Nagar, residents have taken the initiative themselves.

Felicia Felix said she took the lead to clean up the surroundings herself.

"We regularly maintain a small section of the road in front of our house and it's not just because of the fireworks. This ensures that we always have a clean road and we don't have to rely on anyone else to do the work," she told *DH*.

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Also Available At : Jayanagar: Sarathy, Ph: 41210047; Vishaals, Ph: 08022447285; Royal Mart, Ph: 8790311104; Anjana Superstores, Ph: 41301836; Kitchenmart, Ph: 26652885; Aravinda, Ph: 41301989;**Bankcolony**:Vardhaman Ind, Ph: 22428300;**Banashankari:**Varada Glass & Crky, Ph: 9980949316; Patel Agn, Ph: 26714285;Patel Ktchen Apl, Ph: 9079061706; Chamundi Ind, Ph: 26712633;**Bilekhalli:**Sree Pooja Ha, Ph: 9036919084; **Bommanahalli:**Sri Durga Ha, Ph: 9900674018;**Chamarjpet:**Vadirajstores, Ph: 41517646;**Devarachikkanahalli:**Sapna Ha, Ph: 9738732036;**Electronic City:**Dream Mart Hm, Ph: 9148934858;**Hosa Rd:**Maharaja Kw-9036400829;**Hosakota:**Dream Mart Hm-9964744480;**Isro Layout;**Bhumi Kitchen, Ph: 9916830850;**Jp Nagar**: Surya Kitchen World, Ph: 9449762988;**Kanakapura Rd**: Royal Mart, Ph: 28425777;**Padmanabnagar:**Royalmart, Ph: 9886088993;**Uthrahalli:**Royalmart, Ph: 26394114;Rme Super Market, Ph: 9964228208;**Mysore Road:**The Karnataka Metal Industry, Ph: 9449342727;**Ayyappanagar:**Top Mart Sm, Ph: 7204448111; **Babusapalya:**Karnataka Ha, Ph: 8105754544;**Basaveshwarnagar:**Bigday Hm, Ph: 9972517344; Mahaveer Ha, Ph: 9844173501; Modern Colln, Ph: 23583440;Aadhinath Kitchen Gal, Ph: 41220555;**Gayathri Ngr:**J.K.Steel, Ph: 23320853;**Giri Nagar**:Vidya Ent , Ph: 9449988650;Matahji Ha , Ph: 7019385120; **Bagalgunte**:Royal Mart, Ph: 9538000072;**Chandra Layout:**Rajguru Kw, Ph: 9513034351; Pavan Kw, Ph: 8618028319;**Ganganagar:**Salemindustries, Ph: 41284470;Patel Ind, Ph: 8050899296;**Hesargatta Main Rd:**Royal Mart, Ph: 28398200;**Horamavu:**Mamtha Ha, Ph: 8880050050;**Hrbr Layout:**Bhavani Ha, Ph: 9845916164;**Harlurur**: Vinayaka Ha, Ph: 7760531454:**Katriguppe:**Mk Metal Mart, Ph: 9035779199;**Kr Puram:**Srm Elect, Ph: 9845445748; Pooja Ele, Ph: 9738850503; **Boodhigere Rd**:New Royal Fresh, Ph: 9538038885; **Kamanhalli:**Ramdev Steel, Ph: 7259575732 ;Hm Traders, Ph: 9964797616;**Kasavanahalli:**Mathaji Ha, Ph: 8880796036;**Kunadanahalli:** New Prakash Ha, Ph: 7090444111; **Kengeri**;Falcon Hm, Ph: 7829999066;**Koramangala:**Sowbhagya Traders, Ph: 7337733887;**Kmr Swy Layout**:Patel Ha, Ph: 8951979665;**Laggere:**Top Mart, Ph: 9110246047;**Lnpura:**Arihanth Ent, Ph: 7899633338;**Malleshwaram:**Deviprasad Ha, Ph: 23564536;Bright Novelty, Ph: 23343505;**Mathikere:**M.Bhawarlals Inc, Ph: 41724740; Maharaja Agency, Ph: 41278050; **Kadugodi:**Little Wonder, Ph: 9961224224;**Madiwala:**Surya Ha, Ph: 9449635332;**Malleshpalya:**Bajrang Ha, Ph: 9449526463;New Bheru Ha, Ph: 9448680738;Ramdev Ha, Ph: 9035175860;Sri Bhagawathi Ha, Ph: 9590575427; Maa Ambe Ha, Ph: 8884198322; **Magadiroad:**Royal Mart, Ph: 23584498;**Annaporneshwari Nagar:**Deepak Ha, Ph: 9148912736;**M S Palya:**Royal Mart, Ph: 8147014079;**B Narayanpura:** Ph: Mart; Ph: 7676726487;**Rajajinagar:** R S Mart, Ph: 6363602929; Mahalakshmi Metal House, Ph: 23355994; Rathna Sales, Ph: 23375566; Dhanalakshmi Kitchen World, Ph: 41285801;Jayalakshmi Kw, Ph: 9844755146; Pooja Stl Cent, Ph: 23327014; **Rr Nagar:**Milan Ha, Ph: 28605619;Pavan Kg, Ph: 9739207043;**Tavarakere:**Mytri Mart Sm, Ph: 7996598838;**T C Palya:**Rhk Super Mkt, Ph: 9731668995; Big Day Sm, Ph: 8867604818; Karnataka Ha, Ph: 8105754544;**Tipsandra:**Pawar Ha, Ph: 9980517021;Milan Ha, Ph: 9986196375;Ramdev Ha, Ph: 7406901545;**Ulsoor:**Aishwaryapranam Ha, Ph: 9902788429;Pranam Steel Center, Ph: 9448053781;**Udaynagar:**Mother India-9036189765;**Venkatapura:**Pooja Kg-9900426176;**Vijayanagar:**Vijaylaxmi Kw, Ph: 9845022284; Mahendras, Ph: 23141126;Maruthi Ha, Ph: 8904689155;**Vidyarnapura:**Praksh Kw, Ph: 8050620877,Mahalakshmi Steel House, Ph: 9663375159;All Seasons Hm, Ph: 9946728736;**Whitefield:**Rolla Hm, Ph: 9148003448;Loyalcity, Ph: 7892565797;Royal Mart, Ph: 7079734574;**Yelahanka:**Royalmart, Ph: 41705760;Mutha Electricals, Ph: 22971920;Sai Kitchen World Ph: 9632811797; **Btm Layout**: Patel Agencies, Ph: 9482853401;**Tumkur:**N.R Metal Agency, Ph: 0816-2275003; Kavitha Kitchen Ware; Ph: 9538537166;Surya Metal Store, Ph: 9731351050;Tumkur Trade Centre, Ph: 9901432287; Dharshan Ha, Ph: 9632132567; Sudha Ha, Ph: 9964011253; **Gubbi**:Keerthi Gas Stove, Ph: 9686004169; **Tiptur**: Sri Sai Electronics, Ph: 8861432166;Srirama-Ent, Ph: 9880362018; Kumar And Kumar, Ph: 9141609900;**Turuvekere**:Sri Sai Electronics, Ph: 8861432166; **Pavgada:**Shivanagere Ha, Ph: 9880768236; Meenakshi Appl, Ph: 9880360326; **Sira**:Swamy Ent, Ph: 9741561491; Lakshmi Sreel, Ph: 9060434807; Mallikarjuna Ha, Ph: 8123206930; **Madhugiri**:Akshya Ha, Ph: 9141786066; Vinayaka Store, Ph: 9900219291; **Kunigal:**Karnataka Metal Stores, Ph: 9448550390; New Karnataka Steel Centre, Ph: 08132221548; Karnataka Ha, Ph: 8892197645; **Kgf**-Prakash Ha, Ph: 9845113454;**Bangarpet**: Kumar Stores, Ph: 9845935240; **Gauribidanur:**Sri Raju Ha, Ph: 9448249527; Dhighvijaya Elec, Ph: 7204757456;**Kanakapura:**Sri Kabbalamma Ha, Ph: 9880835508;**Kolar:**Reddy Ele, Ph: 9844472531;Rakesh Ele, Ph: 9880634555;Naveenprakash Ha, Ph: 9844997787;**Malur:**Srm Elec , Ph: 9845445748; Reddy Ele, Ph: 9844435121;**Vijayapura:** Rmcity, Ph: 9845164990;Reddy Ele, Ph: 9900336061;**Devanahalli**:New Sowmya Ele, Ph: 9141335210;**Chintamani:**Great India Ele, Ph: 9742963551;Lavanya Stores, Ph: 9242498294.

Nobel laureates to deliver feature talks at IISc

BENGALURU, DHNS: An event focusing on the future of urban ecosystems, cutting-edge scientific discoveries, and innovations in global health will be held on November 3 at the JN Tata Auditorium, Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

Organised under the banner 'The Future We Want', the programme will feature talks by Nobel laureates David MacMillan (Chemistry, 2021) and James Robinson (Economic Sciences, 2024), along with several other distinguished experts, including Tolullah Oni, Gagandeep Kang, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, and Kush Parmar.

The event will take place from 10.30 am to 1 pm.

Realtor killed in accident

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 57-year-old realtor was killed after being allegedly run over by a cement mixer truck in the Chikkajala Traffic Police Station limits on Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Darshan, a resident of Vidyaranyapura, who also ran a signboard-making business.

The incident occurred at 8.45 am on the Sathanur–Bagalur Road. Darshan was reportedly heading towards Hoskote to inspect a property when a speeding truck rammed into his motorcycle from behind, killing him on the spot. The truck driver fled the scene after the accident, the police said.

Tunnel Rd: HC asks govt to clarify on plan to fell trees in Lalbagh

Two PILs filed challenging 16.7-km road project

A view of the 300-million-year-old rock formation inside Lalbagh Botanical Garden at Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka High Court on Saturday asked the state government to inform by Tuesday as to whether there is any proposal to fell trees inside Lalbagh Botanical Garden for the proposed 16.7-km Bangalore Twin Tunnel Road project.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C M Poonacha orally asked the government advocate to clarify the position on allegations of proposal to cut trees inside the botanical garden.

The bench was hearing two public interest petitions filed by Dr Adikesavalu Ravindra and theater personality Prakash Belawadi. The petitions are filed challenging the July 14, 2025 tender notification issued by the state government and the BBMP (now Greater Bengaluru Authority - GBA) pertaining to the project.

During the hearing, Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya, who appeared as counsel for one of the petitioners Prakash Belawadi, submitted that trees inside Lalbagh are under threat as around 6.5 acres inside Lalbagh area have been demarcated. He further said that already the ingress and egress of public is restricted inside the park. He further submitted that a rock formation, which is millions of years old and also a protected monument, is under threat.

At this stage, the Bench sought response from the government advocate regarding the apprehension about cutting of trees inside the park and asked her to verify if there is any proposal to cut the trees.

The government advocate informed that one of the PILs was posted to December 9 for further hearing. The Bench said that both the petitions may be tagged while asking the government to clarify by Tuesday only on the proposal to cut the trees inside the park. The Bench also ordered notice to the GBA, the Geological Survey of India in the fresh PIL filed by Prakash Belawadi.

'Area cordoned'

According to the petition filed by Belawadi, the officials inspected Lalbagh in the first week of October. They had cordoned areas for acquisition and are attempting to engage in tree felling and excavation. The petition said the rock formation is 3-billion-year-old geological (rock) and if the project continues it becomes irreversible.

The petitioner said that an expert committee report, filed in May 2025, had identified catastrophic gaps including absence of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), aquifer damage risks and flood hazards. According to the petitioner, this report was deliberately withheld from the public and the tender process began in July 2025. The petition also contended that the project would drastically affect Bengaluru's groundwater and borewell recharges.

The other petition, filed by Adikesavalu Ravindra, Vinod Vyasulu and N S Mukunda, all residents of Bengaluru city, alleged that the authorities have not sought an approval of the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority and the Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee, making the project constitutionally and statutorily infirm.

They further said the tunnel road is only for cars and taxis while two-wheelers, autorickshaws and buses are altogether barred, which creates an arbitrary classification among similarly placed urban commuters.

BMTC bus mows down pedestrian

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 58-year-old woman died after being hit by a BMTC electric bus opposite Hampi Nagar bus stop in Vijayanagar on Saturday evening.

The deceased has been identified as Mala, a resident of Hampi Nagar.

The incident occurred around 6.15 pm when Mala was crossing the road. The BMTC bus (registration number KA51 AK 7057), operating on the Yeshwantpur–Vijayanagar route, knocked her down while approaching the bus stop and she died on the spot due to severe head injuries.

Vijayanagar Traffic Police rushed to the scene and shifted the body to a nearby government hospital for postmortem. The bus has been seized, and the driver is being questioned. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway.

TELLING A TALE

Artistes present a dance drama during the valedictory of Kittur Utsava at Channammana Kittur in Belagavi district on Saturday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah (not in picture) felicitated the descendants of Kittur Samsthana on the occasion. DH PHOTO

CM hints at Cabinet expansion after Nov

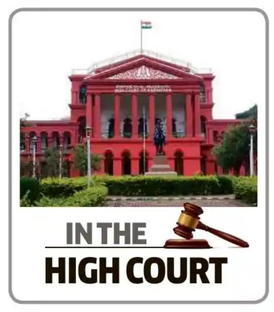
BELAGAVI, PTI: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday hinted at a Cabinet expansion after November, when his government completes half term.

Speaking to reporters here, the chief minister said the Congress high command told him four months ago to take up Cabinet expansion but he told them that the exercise would be carried out after his government completes two and a half years.

"Once that milestone is reached, I will hold discussions with them and proceed as per their guidance," Siddaramaiah said.

Details of passport can't be shared under RTI, says HC

Rejects plea by Mumbai bizman, cites provision of RTI Act, SC ruling



AMBARISH B
BENGALURU, DHNS

If details of a passport are made available to any third party, including a complainant in proceedings under section 138 of Negotiable Instruments Act (cheque bounce), it could cause a danger to the life or physical safety of the concerned person, the Karnataka high court has observed in a recent judgement.

Justice Suraj Govidaraj said this while rejecting the petition filed by a Mumbai-based businessman seeking information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act a copy of the passport of the accused and copy of the Lookout Circular (LOC) issued against him.

The petitioner Prakash Chimanlal Sheth had filed the cheque bounce case against the accused before a magistrate court at Puttur, Dakshina Kannada district. Since the accused is absconding, LOC was issued against him. According to the petitioner, pursuant to the LOC, the accused was detained at Mumbai International Airport but was later released.

The petitioner filed an application under the RTI seeking a copy of the passport and the LOC issued against him. He also sought all information and records available with SP, Mangaluru office, about the detention of the accused at Mumbai International Airport on December 1, 2023, and about his release on the same day.

This application was rejected by the Public Information Officer (PIO) at the SP office on the grounds that the information sought could not be furnished in view of prohibition under Rule 8(1)(h) of the RTI Act.

Further, it was stated that the document sought pertains to the special branch, and in terms of the notification issued, the RTI Act does not apply to special branches in District Police Offices. The appeal against this order was also rejected by the Appellate Authority at the SP office, Mangaluru. The petitioner filed an appeal before the Karnataka Information Commission (KIC). The petitioner moved the high court after the KIC also rejected his appeal on March 19, 2025.

After examining the materials, the provisions of the RTI Act, and the Apex Court decision in the Puttaswamy case, Justice Suraj Govindaraj noted that the information sought would be governed by the law of privacy and hence cannot be granted.

"The disclosure of the information like a passport, in my considered opinion, being personal in nature would cause immense harm and injury to a person. The details of a passport are private to a person and if those details of a passport are made available to any third party, including the petitioner who has filed Section 138 of NI Act proceedings, it could cause a danger to the life or physical safety of the concerned person," Justice Suraj Govindaraj said.

The court further said, "In the event the petitioner seeks the said information for use in the prosecution of the proceedings under Section 138 of the NI Act, the petitioner could always make an application in the said proceedings for the summoning of those documents, which the court, in its wisdom, could consider. It is made clear that this court has not expressed any opinion on the merits of the application."

Elderly woman killed in cylinder blast in KR Puram

Four others injured; explosion sound heard up to 5 km

BENGALURU, DHNS

An elderly woman died and four others sustained injuries after a suspected LPG cylinder explosion at a house in KR Puram on Saturday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Akkayyamma (81). Her granddaughter Chandana (22) is said to be in critical condition.

The blast also partially damaged three neighbouring houses. The sound of the explosion was reportedly heard up to four to five kilometres away.

The explosion occurred at a house owned by Ramesh and rented to Shekhar's family. They took the house on rent about nine months ago.

Shekhar lived there with his two children — Chandana and Kiran Kumar — and his elderly mother, Akkayyamma. Shekar's wife passed away a year ago.

Fire and emergency services personnel rushed to the spot and retrieved Akkayyamma's body from the debris while the injured were rushed to a nearby hospital.

According to the police, the incident occurred around 7.15 am at Triveni Nagar. Akkayyamma was asleep when the roof slab collapsed on her due to the impact of the explosion. Three others — Shekhar (55), his son Kiran Kumar (24), and a neighbour, Kanchana (45) — sustained injuries.

"Shekhar told the police that the blast occurred when a family member switched on the stove. The exact cause will be known after experts inspect the site," said a senior police officer.

Rajalakshmi, a neighbour, said she initially mistook the loud sound for firecrackers being burst after Deepavali.

"When I came out to check, I was shocked to see the house had collapsed. Neighbours rushed to rescue the injured and shift them to the hospital. Even the window panes of nearby houses shattered due to the impact," she said.

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje and MLA Byrathi Basavaraj visited the site and assured compensation to the affected family.

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL
K KAMARAJ ROAD, BANGALORE-42
Tele No : 080-25581238 www.apsbangalore.edu.in

LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION – 01 NOV 2025 (1000HRS)
TENDER INVITIATION

Tender No	Description of Work
APS/340/2025-26	SS Railing 304 Grade in the corridors of school (2st Floor) Approx 1388 Rft
APS/341/2025-26	Purchase of 200 x Bench & Desk for Students for Class 9th & 10th
APS/342/2025-26	Overhead fabrication of roof top with PPGI Sheet approx. area 4700 Sqft
APS/345/2025-26	Construction of Boundary Wall at Parents' Parking Area with cleaning of surrounding area
APS/346/2025-26	Call for quotations for the sale of three old vintage school buses and one Eeco van (No APS/339/2025-26 CANCELLED)

Note : Details of the work is available in school website. Please submit sealed quotation on the envelope mentioning the No and Name of work address to **ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL, KAMARAJ ROAD, BANGALORE on or before 01 NOV 2025 by 1000hrs.**

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Construction Organization, Ernakulam Jn

1. **TENDER NOTICE No: 16 - CE-CN-ERS-2025 - OT Dated 22.10.2025**
Name of work: Manufacturing, supply and stacking of machine crushed Track Ballast for new track in TVC - NYY.
Tender Value: ₹ **2865.52 Lakhs**. Bid Security: ₹ **15,82,800/-**
Completion Period : **18 Months**
Date and time of tender closing : **18/11/2025. 15.00 Hrs**
2. **TENDER NOTICE No: 17- CE-CN-ERS-2025 - OT Dated 23.10.2025**
Name of work: Proposed new Health Unit at ErnakulamJn finishing and balance works of SSE/BRI, SSE/works buildings, SSE/P. Way, SSE/S&T buildings, yard, P. Way Depot building stores, sheds and yard.
Tender Value: ₹ **502.50 Lakhs**. Bid Security: ₹ **4,01,300/-**
Completion Period : **6 Months**
Date and time of tender closing : **18/11/2025.15.00 Hrs**
3. **TENDER NOTICE No: 18- CE-CN-ERS-2025 - OT Dated 22.10.2025**
Name of work: Proposed contiguous pile returning, structure in 221/012 to Nemom and other ancillary works in TVC - Nemom.
Tender Value: ₹ **1142.19 Lakhs**. Bid Security: ₹ **7,21,100/-**
Completion Period : **6 Months**
Date and time of tender closing : **14/11/2025.15.00 Hrs**

Complete details and tender document will be available at **https://www.ireps.gov.in**
Chief Engineer/Construction
Ernakulam Jn

COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT
Tender Notice No: EL/29/RT2-12_2025/K/846; **Dated:** 18-10-2025. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Tender No.:** RT2-12_2025. **Name of Work :** At Katihar Division - Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of UPS & Inverter of different make and capacities installed at PRS/UTS and service building/LC gates at different stations/locations over Katihar division for two (02) years. **Tender Value:** ₹74,02,970.56/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹1,48,100/-; Date & time closing of tender at **15:00** hrs. and **opening at 15:30** hrs. on **10-11-2025**. Complete information alongwith tender document of above e-tender will be available upto in the website **www.ireps.gov.in**
Sr. DEE (G&Chg.), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
GeM NOTICE
Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical), Southern Railway, Madurai- 625016 for and on behalf of The President of India invites Online tenders in **Two packet system** from reputed contractors for the following work as per tender notice given in Government e-Marketing place (GeM) portal. The tenderer(s)/Contractor(s) to apply for works in Madurai Division, need to be enrolled in the GeM portal and only online tenders will be accepted.

Sl. No	Name of the work	Outcome based comprehensive cleaning contract at Madurai Railway Colony & Divisional office for a period of 1095 days		
	GeM Bid No	Place of work	Value of the work	Tender closing date
1	GEM/2025/B/6812701 Dt: 23.10.2025	Madurai - MDU Division	₹ 3,35,76,911 (Including GST & Other taxes)	13.11.2025 12:00 hrs

Further details are available in the detailed tender notice on website **www.Gem.gov.in**
DME/EnHM & Frt./MDU

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
CORRIGENDUM TO AUCTION PROGRAMME DECEMBER'25
NOTICE NO: 12/2025
e-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous scrap, Non-Ferrous scrap, other Misc scrap, condemned Wagon, Coaches & Locos, Scrap Rails and other Permanent Way scrap material.

e-auction conducted by	Existing Auction date	Prepone to	Material for auction
GSD/PER	08/12/2025	**05/12/2025**	The details of items to be sold in e-auction will be available in catalogue **www.ireps.gov.in** website
	16/12/2025	**12/12/2025**	
	23/12/2025	**19/12/2025**	
Note: All other auctions scheduled for December'25 remains unaltered			

For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our web-site **http:// www.ireps.gov.in** ->E-Auction->Sale->Live Auctions.
Principal Chief Materials Manager

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'FEE'L GOOD FACTOR | Manual payment ad-hoc arrangement till software is ready

Gig workers' Act: Rules soon, cess quantum yet to be decided

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Two months after passing the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers' (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, which mandates levying a 1-5% cess per transaction on aggregators, the labour department is yet to finalise the quantum of cess for different aggregators.

As per the Act, the cess will be levied on aggregator platforms like Swiggy, Zomato, Ola and Uber, which employ gig workers.

It mandates varied welfare fees for different categories of aggregators, which have their own mechanisms of channeling customers' payments.

After passing the Act, the next phase is to publish rules. G Manjunath, additional labour commissioner, said there had been extensive pre-legislative consultations to take along all stakeholders.

"Aggregators like Swiggy and Zomato have initiated social security measures such as accident insurance and maternity benefits. They have provided their perspectives and suggestions," he said.

Labour Minister Santosh Lad told *DH*, "We sought objections, after which the final file came to the government. We will finalise things in a week or 10 days".

Manjunath said once the rules are published, notification will be issued, in which the quantum of cess will be mentioned. Once notified, all aggregators will be mandated to pay welfare fee. The final call on the quantum of cess will be taken by the labour minister.

As per the proposed rules, each aggregator platform operating in Karnataka should register itself. They should also submit a database of all gig workers employed by them.

The aggregator shall automatically calculate welfare fee and self-declare it within five working days of each quarter.

The department is preparing a software to channel the collection of welfare fee, as registrations happen online and all payouts and details have to be submitted online.

However, the process of calling for tenders, creating software and finalising it may take five-six months, by when the notification will be issued. The department has come up with an ad-hoc arrangement till then.

"The rules mandate having the payment through manual mode till the software is ready. Aggregators can file a statement of their payouts and pay the required welfare fee to the board. Once the software is ready, the process will be digitised," Manjunath said.

However, trade unions are not satisfied with the consultation process. "We are very disappointed that the central trade unions have not been taken on board, either for consultations or in the working committee while framing rules," Satyanand Mukund, state secretary of All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), said.

Mukund said the transaction fee framed under the rules was "grossly inadequate" and won't help achieve social security for gig workers.

Providing social security for gig workers is a pet project of leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and was a part of the Congress' manifesto for the 2023 Assembly elections. The law is expected to help around four lakh gig workers in state.

The Gig Workers' Act proposes to form a welfare fund. Apart from the welfare cess, contributions by individual platform-based gig workers, central and state government grants will flow into the welfare fund. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Key features

The Act proposes to form a welfare fund. Apart from the welfare cess, contributions by individual platform-based gig workers, central and state government grants will flow into the welfare fund.

The aggregators can make voluntary contributions over and above the welfare fee to the fund under corporate social responsibility.

The Act confers powers on the state government to form a welfare board comprising the labour minister, government officials and representatives of workers, aggregators and civil society.

Grievance redressal

The rules specify that any aggrieved gig worker should file his grievance with the internal dispute resolution committee of the aggregator within 7 working days. The committee shall comprise both members of the management and senior gig workers.

If any party is aggrieved by the final decision, they can file an appeal before the gig workers' welfare board within 30 days.

Background

Though the government released the draft bill for public consultations in July 2024, which was also supported by the joint committee of trade unions, it wasn't immediately passed since there was opposition to the Bill from aggregators and industries, which was voiced in the Cabinet by the ministers concerned.

Finally, the government went ahead with an ordinance after Rahul Gandhi held extensive discussions in Delhi with Lad, Industries Minister M B Patil, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge and representatives of gig workers and evolved a consensus on the Bill.

Renukaswamy murder accused deliberately delaying trial: SPP

'Suspects employing dilatory tactics by filing frivolous pleas'

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) P Prasanna Kumar filed a memo at a Bengaluru court claiming that the accused in the Renukaswamy murder case weren't cooperating and were deliberately delaying the trial. Kumar's memo was filed on Friday before the Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge (CCH-57).

Renukaswamy's mutilated body was found disposed of near a stormwater drain in Sumanahalli, West Bengaluru, on June 9, 2024. On June 11, popular Kannada actor Darshan, his friend Pavithra Gowda and seven others were arrested.

The police nabbed the others in the subsequent days and claimed that the motive behind the murder was Renukaswamy's lewd messages to Pavithra.

In his memo, seen by *DH*, the SPP said that Pavithra (accused 1), on August 23, 2025, filed a frivolous application seeking default bail, instead of making a submission when the matter was listed for hearing before charge, where the court would formally decide whether to frame charges against the accused. On August 30, the prosecution filed an objection.

The SPP stated that Darshan (accused 2) filed an application seeking certain facilities in the prison. Prison officials submitted a report stating that he had facilities in accordance with the Karnataka Prison Manual, 2021.

As per the memo, Darshan, instead of making his submissions on the charge, sought an explanation and made reference to the High Court for initiating contempt against jail officials on September 15, 2025, and filed another application on October 9, 2025, seeking a local inquiry by the sessions court to check if he was provided facilities as per the jail manual.

The court on October 10 directed the member-secretary, District Legal Service Authority, to visit the jail and submit a report.

The secretary submitted a report on October 17 that "clearly indicates that all the claims made by the accused in the said application alleging non-providing of facilities by the prison officials were false."

It is pertinent to note that on August 14, 2025, the Supreme Court cancelled the bail granted by the Karnataka High Court to Darshan, Pavithra and others and allowed the prosecution's special leave petition.

The Apex Court, while cancelling the bail, had observed: "Given the gravity of the offence, the trial shall be conducted expeditiously, and a judgment rendered on merits, in accordance with law."

"It is humbly submitted that though the prosecution has been ready and willing to go ahead with the matter, the accused, by employing delaying tactics, started filing applications seeking discharge one after the other. The above-narrated facts and the events that have taken place from August 14, 2025, clearly indicate that none of the accused are cooperating in the early conclusion of the trial," the memo claimed, adding that the court should proceed with the trial expeditiously.

Govt exempts small buildings in ULBs from OC mandate

BENGALURU, DHNS: The government has provided a relief for many building owners by exempting ground+2 or stilt+3 buildings built on plots up to 1,200 sqft under all urban local bodies from obtaining an occupancy certificate (OC).

Recently, the government had provided a similar relief to such buildings within the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) jurisdiction and has now extended the order to include all other urban local bodies.

In an order passed on Friday, the government noted that inspection of every building before providing a OC will be a strain on manpower. Hence, using the powers provided under the Section 190(2-A) of the Karnataka Municipalities Act, 1964, the decision was taken.

The decision is expected to help thousands of property owners who were left in a lurch after the Supreme Court made OC mandatory for power supply and water supply to buildings.

SIT issues notice to Thimarody and 4 others for questioning

MANGALURU, DHNS: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged mass burials in Dharmasthala, has issued "accused notices" to five individuals, directing them to appear before the investigation officer on October 27, for questioning.

The notices have been served to Mahesh Shetty Thimarody, Girish Mattannavar, T Jayant, Vittal Gowda, and Sujatha Bhat. SIT sources told *DH* that these individuals were earlier issued "witness notices." However, based on the recent findings and corroborative evidences, they have now been served with accused notices, signifying a crucial shift in the nature of their involvement in the case.

Meanwhile, SIT chief Pronab Mohanty visited SIT office in Beltangady on Saturday to review the progress of the investigation.

The investigation team is in the process of preparing a comprehensive report to be submitted into the court soon. The report will include the findings from the field investigations, witness statements, and technical evidence gathered so far.

Meanwhile, the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) reports related to the skeletal remains discovered at spot number 6, near spot number 11, and Bangleggudde are awaited. The remains, which were exhumed under the supervision of forensic experts, are undergoing multiple levels of scientific analysis.

Apart from the regular FSL tests, certain articles and biological samples have been sent to an environmental DNA expert at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, for specialised examination. These analyses are expected to provide deeper insights into the identity of the deceased persons and the circumstances surrounding the burial.

SURVIVAL OF THE SWIFTEST

A leopard makes a kill of a Malabar Giant Squirrel – a species of Western Ghats known for agility and remarkable acrobatics. The squirrel leapt on to a tree where the big cat lay camouflaged. In a split-second burst of power and precision, the leopard brought down the squirrel – an unusual hunt as both are masters of treetops. The moment was frozen during a safari in Kabini wildlife sanctuary of Nagarahole tiger reserve. PHOTO/ARVIND KARTHIK

RSS march postponed in Gurmitkal for want of permission

GURMITKAL (YADGIR DISTRICT), DHNS

The "Path Sanchalan" (route march) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevaka Sangha scheduled to be held in Gurmitkal on October 25 has been postponed since the authorities concerned were yet to decide on its application seeking permission.

The organisers had made an application to the tahsildar on October 21 seeking permission to take out the route march.

Since there was no reply, they met the tahsildar on Thursday and the latter informed them that he had no powers to grant permission.

On the same day, the organisers made an application to the office of the deputy commissioner seeking permission.

The DC told them that permission cannot be granted in haste and asked the organisers to fix another date for the march and seek permission.

"According to the government circular, permission must be obtained within three days for any programme at public places. The organisers have now submitted a fresh application and we are scrutinising it. Permission will be granted if everything is found to be proper," Deputy Commissioner Harshal Bhoyar said.

Dept moves to reclaim 580 acres of forest land in C'magaluru

BALEHONNUR (CHIKKAMAGALURU DIST), DHNS: In two separate cases, the Forest Department has unearthed illegal encroachment of 580 acres of forest land by private individuals and has registered cases against nine people.

In the first case, 450 acres of land in Survey no 122 belonging to the Halasuru Reserve Forest area in Tanoodi village of Kalasa taluk was found to be illegally occupied by three individuals. The department has filed a case against them.

In another case, 130 acres of forest land in Survey no 9 (B Kanabur village) and Survey nos 95, 96, and 97 (Bannur village) of Balehonnur hobli were allegedly encroached upon by six persons. A case has been filed against them as well. The officials have registered cases under various sections of the Karnataka Forest Act, 1963, and the Karnataka Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

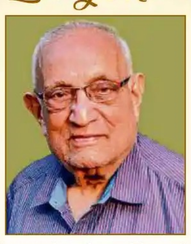
This is reportedly the largest forest land encroachment case detected in the district, and the Forest Department is preparing to register more cases against several others from the Kalasa region, who are believed to have encroached upon hundreds of acres of forest land.

Disruption in Bescom online bill payment, other services

BENGALURU, DHNS: Citizens will not be able to pay their electricity bills online or apply for any services from Monday evening to Tuesday morning since the online services of all five ESCOMs will not be available for consumers during the said period since the ESCOMs have taken up emergency system maintenance works.

Online services like online bill payment, new connections, name change, and tariff change services through the ESCOMs portals–www.bescom.co.in, www.hescom.co.in, www.gescomglb.org, www.mescom.org.in, and www.cescmysore.in and payment services through BESCOM Mitra mobile app, Bengaluru One and Karnataka One will also not be available during this period.

In Loving Memory



We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of

Shri N. R. Tirumal

on 22nd October 2025 in Bangalore. He was the beloved husband of Smt. Jayanthi Tirumal and father of Shailesh, Smruti, and Sruti and the cherished patriarch of an extended family. A Chartered Accountant by profession, he dedicated over six decades in service to his clients with integrity and care.

May his noble soul attain eternal peace.
— The bereaved family

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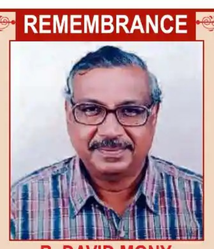

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Ready to resign if high command tells me: KBG

BENGALURU, DHNS: Amid continuing speculation about the 'November Revolution' and reports of a possible Cabinet rejig, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Saturday said that he would resign from the Cabinet if the Congress high command asked him to do so.

Hinting at a possible reshuffle of the Cabinet in November, Gowda added, "Right at the time of the government's formation, it had been decided that there would be a Cabinet reshuffle after two-and-a-half years. We were informed about this before we were offered positions on the Cabinet. I am ready to quit, if the high command asks me to."

Expressing his gratitude to the Congress, he said, "The party has given me everything; has given me opportunities. I have enough work to do, but I feel fulfilled in terms of opportunities I have got."

'Injustice' in allocation of funds

Meanwhile, senior legislator Appaji Nadagouda alleged that some ministers in the state had formed groups among themselves, and were meting out injustice to other MLAs, who were not getting sufficient funds to develop their respective constituencies. "Ministers can get more funds and announce projects in their constituencies. Some ministers are betraying MLAs by apportioning more funds, and forming their own groups," said Muddebihal MLA.

2 Australian women cricketers molested in Indore, one held

Cricketers, from Page 3

"No woman should ever have to endure such trauma, and our thoughts and support are with those impacted by this distressing incident. This unfortunate event has deeply affected everyone from MPCA, who cherishes the values of respect, safety, and dignity of women," the association said.

Cricket Australia also confirmed that two members of the women's team were approached and touched inappropriately by a motorcyclist while walking to a café in Indore.

Condemning the incident, Devajit Saikia, honorary secretary, BCCI and stated, "This is a deeply regrettable and isolated incident. India has always been known for its warmth, hospitality, and care towards all guests. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards such acts. We will also review our existing safety protocols and strengthen them further, if necessary, to ensure such incidents are not repeated."

40 docs let go, Bidar govt hospital in ICU

Govt hospital, from Page 3

"The salary issue would be resolved in three to four days. As the intake has been increased from 150 to 200, we need additional doctors and they would be accommodated. We need to follow the roster and they would be given preference as they are institutional candidates. Recruitments will be done in around 20 days."

On funds shortage, he said that initially, the state government had directed BRIMS to mobilise funds internally to pay salaries of the contract-based doctors. Now, the government has agreed to give additional funds for their salaries. Once they are selected after the interviews, they would be paid directly by the government, he said.

DKS dismisses tunnel critics, calls Surya 'empty vessel'

DKS-tunnel road, from Page 3

"The project is going to be a toll road. If he (Surya) doesn't want the tunnel road project, he should suggest an alternative. He has not been able to bring even a grant of Rs 10 for the city. Why did their government not try to address traffic issues? Why did they not address the garbage issue? Why were flyovers not made?"

The DyCM also used the opportunity to defend the government's Khata conversion drive for properties in Bengaluru, which he termed the Congress government's "sixth guarantee".

Dismissing corruption allegations levelled by JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy over the khata conversion scheme, Shivakumar challenged him to an open debate on the matter. "What corruption is happening in 'B' khata transfer? This is being done to benefit people. Currently people don't get loans for 'B' khata properties. Kumaraswamy's government could not do this."

Shivakumar said the government made a "historic decision" with regards to khata conversion. "Correcting the property records of people is our sixth guarantee. The Central government has given an award for this work," he said.

Shivakumar concluded that in a city with a population of 1.40 crore and over 70 lakh daily commuters, radical infrastructure solutions are essential. "We will do our job. We are committed to it. Bengaluru is a global city. We will do whatever needs to be done to protect it," he asserted.

Minister bats for a check on commercial goods in pvt buses

Ramalinga Reddy suggests norms, regular crackdown

The remains of the private bus gutted in a fire accident near Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, that claimed 20 lives on Friday. The bus was found to be carrying in its luggage cabin a consignment of around 300 smartphones.

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

The reports of the presence of 300 smartphones intensifying the Kurnool bus fire tragedy has turned the spotlight on the safety lapses involved in the transportation of goods by private operators, said Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy.

As per forensic reports, the exploding batteries of these phones added to the intensity of the fire, which claimed the lives of 20 people. The shipment was en route to Bengaluru for an e-commerce giant to deliver to buyers.

"More vigilance is required when it comes to passenger vehicles operated by private entities. There needs to be stricter regulations to monitor the movement of commercial goods on these vehicles, and a clear guideline needs to be issued with regard to regular checks. We're looking into this matter and we will crack down on these services," Ramalinga Reddy told *DH*.

Carrying commercial goods on a passenger bus is a violation - common across the state, said a senior transport department official. "Private operators end up taking these consignments under the radar, and are only caught when there are special checks. It is not possible to check every bus as there are countless private operators. Since they operate under the radar, they end up transporting all sorts of goods, but there have been no cases of transportation of illegal materials," he said.

Bus modifications

The minister also highlighted the need for stricter regulations regarding bus modifications. "The central government has been issuing these guidelines. There are specific guidelines that need to be followed for both sleeper and seater buses. However, the private operators tend to make modifications either to provide some extra features or cut some costs," he said.

Regular checking of private vehicles is often hindered by out-of-state registrations, he added. "Most of these vehicles have an All India Tourist Permit (AITP), and are registered in different states in order to skimp on taxes, despite solely operating services to and from Karnataka. As a result, their fitness certificates are issued by the state they're registered in, and our officials don't have a say in it. This needs to change. Vehicles predominantly running in Karnataka need to be registered here," he said.

About 25 private buses with AITP were seized on Friday, for operating night services in Karnataka without paying state taxes. The Transport Department plans to continue the crackdown across Bengaluru.

Khata conversion: DKS, Kumaraswamy trade barbs

Deputy CM invites Union minister for an open debate

DCM D K Shivakumar

H D Kumaraswamy

BENGALURU, DHNS

Accusations flew thick and fast as Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar went hammer and tongs at each other on Saturday.

The spat between the two prominent Vokkaliga leaders saw each other questioning the other's integrity.

Responding to Kumaraswamy's claims of the state government 'robbing' the people through the khata conversion scheme, the deputy chief minister threw the gauntlet at the former.

Sixth guarantee

"I am inviting you (Kumaraswamy) for an open debate. What corrupt practices have you found with the khata conversion scheme? Making corrections to the citizens' property documents is the Congress's sixth guarantee scheme. Instead of making the allegations, come for a debate," said the deputy chief minister.

Asking Kumaraswamy to disclose the location of the site where he wished to set up an industry, Shivakumar said, "Then the state government can start acquiring land for the project."

Kumaraswamy, meanwhile, dismissed Shivakumar's challenge.

'No moral right'

"What moral right does Shivakumar have to talk about me? How can one have an open debate with him? He has lost his dignity. I have not minted money like him. Shivakumar must first see all the work I have done as the state's CM," said Kumaraswamy.

Job portfolio

On Shivakumar's query about the industrial site, the Union Minister said, "Let him understand the scope of my portfolio. My job does not entail setting up factories, but involves framing policies and providing incentives."

Substantiate charges, says DKS

In his earlier stint as the Bengaluru Development Minister, Shivakumar 'swallowed' many societies and trusts, alleged Kumaraswamy. "I have a list, and can furnish if needed," he said.

Not willing to let that accusation slide, Shivakumar replied, "Reveal my defects, and I will disclose yours. Instead of resorting to blackmail, substantiate your allegations with documents and let the people decide. Kumaraswamy has the central government at his disposal, and can reveal whatever he wants about me. I have no fear."

FOGGY MORNING

Koppal town wakes up to the first foggy morning of the season on Saturday. Shallow fog covers the historic Ashok Circle, and the Pillar, erected in memory of the martyrs of the 1858 War of Independence. DH PHOTO/BHARATH KANDAKUR

Scheme is 'bogus', don't fall for it, Kumaraswamy tells public

'Wait for two more years till our party comes to power'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Aimed at legitimising the claims of owners to their properties, the initiative undertaken by the government to convert 'B' khatas to 'A' khatas has drawn flak from Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy.

Dubbing the initiative a 'bogus scheme', Kumaraswamy on Saturday urged people not to pay any money to get their khatas changed. "Wait for two more years; our party will come to power, and khata conversion will be done in accordance with the norms for a minimum fee. This is my open appeal to the people of Bengaluru," said Kumaraswamy, charging the government with robbing the people under the pretext of khata conversion.

Dismissing suggestions of a rift with the BJP, Kumaraswamy said that the JD(S) would continue to remain in alliance with the saffron party. "The alliance will come to power in the next elections. We will do khata conversion without burdening the people financially. People are struggling to repay loans they secured for purchasing the properties, and now, they are being asked to pay lakhs of rupees for the 'A' khata," said the Union Minister.

Khata conversion has been a pressing issue in Bengaluru, and even in the state's villages, since 1995, said Kumaraswamy. "In 1997, the conversion rate was fixed at Rs 110/sqm, and the khata was issued using Form 19. Similarly, the price was fixed at Rs 12,263 for a 30ftX40ft site, while the fee for conversion was Rs 1,500," he said.

'RSS has been holding route march for decades'

The state government was trying to divert the public's attention from its failures by stirring up a controversy around the RSS, said Kumaraswamy. Advising the government to focus on development, Kumaraswamy added, "RSS has been conducting route marches for decades now. But the Congress government has turned this into an issue just to hide its failures."

Students irked with govt's decision to up nursing seats after counselling

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government's decision to increase the intake for nursing courses and also to award recognition to new colleges after the third round of counselling has irked students aspiring for nursing seats, who were forced to take up other courses this year.

After the third round of seat allotment through Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) this year, the Department of Medical Education approved over 1,500 seats to at least 90 nursing colleges and also gave recognition to seven new colleges.

The KEA subsequently conducted an extended mop-up round to allot new seats. However, only 350 students were able to attend the extended round seat allotment. The remaining seats have been converted into management quota. All the 1,500 additional seats sanctioned were under the government quota.

In numbers

- 32,164: Total number of seats available
- 661: Number of nursing colleges
- 34: Government nursing colleges
- 10,293: Government quota seats
- 21,871: Private quota seats
- 8,808: Govt quota seats filled

"The seats left vacant after the extended round seat allotment will be automatically converted into management," said a KEA official.

Raising objections to the decision by the government to enhance seats after the third round, a student said, "I wanted to study nursing, but as there was no government quota seat at the college of my choice, I was forced to take up another course. Now, the government has added a few more seats to that college."

Another student said, "There was no information about the extended round. Hence, many of us were forced to take up other courses as there were no seats available at quality nursing colleges. Now, we cannot withdraw admissions as we will not get the refund."

The department officials, however, said that they grant permission based on the recommendation by the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS).

The KEA officials said, "This was a similar issue even during last year's seat allotment. Nursing seats were added even after the completion of all the rounds. We were forced to conduct another round, but of no use for students as they had already taken admissions to other courses."

ORSL not ORS?: Health experts warn of difficulty in differentiating

BENGALURU, DHNS: A simple hydration drink has stirred up a storm across the country.

The ORSL, a popular oral rehydration brand is under scrutiny after health experts went to the court as it is flavored and has high sugar content.

The experts opined that the court order is misleading consumers and defeats the purpose of oral rehydration salts prescribed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), a formula used during dehydration.

When *DH* visited pharmacies in the city asking for ORS, 60% of these pharmacies offered ORSL of either apple flavor or orange flavor.

However, when the reason for consumption was mentioned as diarrhoea, many of them took back the tetra pack and gave actual ORS or Electral powder.

The ORSL pack below the fruit's picture mentions that it is not ORS and that the actual ORS packs contained "WHO recommended formula" to make the identification better.

However, these labels are often overlooked by people, said public health expert Srinath K.

"It is a marketing trick of the brand to name it ORSL and it is actually the mistake of the authorities for letting them sell it in a pharmacy as it is confusing. Uneducated or poor people will consume it as actual ORS".

The ORSL company defended itself, saying that it complies with food regulations and that it has not printed 'WHO recommended formula' on the packets.

The court has allowed the company to sell them till their stocks worth Rs 180 crore are completely sold.

A public health expert, on the condition of anonymous, said, "Risking the lives of crores of people for the company's stocks worth Rs 180 crore to be sold completely shows the value of human lives in the country".

Made investments after due diligence: LIC amid Adani storm

LIC, from Page 3

The report alleged that officials orchestrated a plan to steer LIC into investing in the Adani group earlier this year, when the ports-to-energy conglomerate was facing a debt pile and scrutiny in the US.

The report highlighted LIC's May 2025 investment of $570 million in Adani Ports & SEZ (APSEZ), which holds the highest 'AAA' credit rating in India.

LIC said the Department of Financial Services or any other body does not have any role in its investment decisions, and the report carries statements "with the intentions to prejudice the well-settled decision-making process of LIC and also to tarnish the reputation and image of LIC and the strong financial sector foundations in India."

The insurer is not a small, single-purpose fund but India's largest institutional investor with over Rs 41 lakh crore (over $500 billion) in assets. It invests across 351 publicly listed stocks (as of early 2025) spanning virtually every major business group and sector.

LIC also holds substantial government bonds and corporate debt. Its portfolio is highly diversified, spreading risk.

LIC's exposure to the Adani group is less than 2% of the conglomerate's total debt, helmed by India's second-richest man, Gautam Adani.

Global investors like US' largest funds BlackRock, Apollo, Japan's largest banks Mizuho, MUFG, and Germany's second largest bank DZ Bank have also invested in Adani debt in recent months, reflecting global confidence in the group.

Smartphone cargo may have exploded in Kurnool bus fire

Kurnool, from Page 3

First responders said both mother and child were found fused together, implying she might have held her daughter tightly as flames surrounded them. By the time she climbed down from the upper berth, fire had already engulfed the cabin.

"When a smartphone battery overheats, a process called thermal runaway occurs, triggering a chain reaction of self-sustaining exothermic reactions that can cause explosions and flames reaching 200°C to 1,000°C," explained a battery expert.

Experts also believe that several victims died due to inhalation of thick smoke while struggling to find an escape route. Observers noted that had there been a proper emergency exit, many could have survived.

It is common practice among private bus operators to ferry commercial consignments to earn extra income, storing them in luggage cabins meant for passengers' belongings. They sometimes transport motorcycles but usually empty the fuel tanks to prevent fire risk. In many cases, operators earn nearly as much from booking cargo as they do from passenger fares.

The aluminium base of the gutted R Kaveri bus had completely melted, while the auxiliary air-conditioning battery near the luggage cabin next to the smartphone consignment was also found exploded, underscoring the intensity of the fire.

Sabarimala gold heist: SIT seizes gold from Ballari & B'luru

Sabarimala, from Page 3

Govardhan told a section of the media that he did no wrong and had made donations to the Sabarimala temple, including a door. He shared all information and documents he had with the SIT. Govardhan had also appeared before the SIT in Thiruvananthapuram earlier to give his statement.

The SIT later took Potti to Chennai-based Smart Creations, where the gold plating works were done by Potti.

Three other Bengaluru residents, identified as Aananthasubramanyam, Ramesh and Kalpesh were also under the scanner of the SIT as they were involved in carrying the gold platings.

So far, the SIT has arrested Potti as well as a former administrative officer of the Sabarimala temple Murari Babu. Babu was found to have recorded the gold platings of the temple as copper in records while handing over those to Potti for maintenance.

Other devaswom board employees, arraigned in the two cases registered in connection with the looting of gold from the two 'Dwarapalaka' idols and the door frames of the temple, are likely to be arrested soon.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Rainfall occurred at many places over South Interior and North Interior Karnataka and most places over Coastal Karnataka
Forecast Oct 26: Rainfall to occur at some places over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	26	19.4	7.3
Bidar	29.2	20	23.4
Vijayapura	30	20.8	2.4
Dharwad	27.8	19.8	5.4
Haveri	24.8	20.4	0.4
Kalaburagi	31.4	21.3	20.3
Raichur	29.6	21.4	16.2
COASTAL			
Honnavar	30.6	22	36.3
Karwar	28.7	21.5	119.4
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	29.1	23.6	8.7

INTERIOR SOUTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	26	22.4	0.5
Bengaluru	25.6	20	00
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	28.1	20.2	10.5
Davangere	28	20	00
Hassan	32	NA	00
Mysuru	28	19	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	26.4	18.4	00
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	32	16.9	00
Kolkata	33.4	24.2	00
Mumbai	33.5	25.4	01
Chennai	29.7	24.2	24.2
Pune	29	22.5	00
Hyderabad	29.2	22.9	00
Th'puram	31.5	23.8	59

ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ)
ಮುಧೋಳ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಜಮಖಂಡಿ–587301 ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
Bagalkot University
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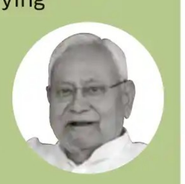
Website: https:// bgku.karnataka.gov.in
BGKUJ/RO/2025-26/920 Date: 24-10-2025
Awareness Programme about
Masters in Management Studies & Computer Application
(MBA and MCA)
The programme is arranged at Bagalkot University Campus. Mudhol Road, Jamkhandi at Tuesday 28th Oct, 2025, at 11.00 am. Informative sessions by Industry as well as Academia experts have been arranged.
The Graduates as well as final year Graduation students are invited to attend and avail the benefit.
For Registrations contact : 9742537759
Sd/- Registrar,
Bagalkot University, Jamkhandi-587301

IN NUMBERS

8.5 lakh

officials have been deployed to ensure the smooth and orderly progress of elections in Bihar. The personnel to be deployed include nearly 4.53L polling personnel, 2.5L police officials, 28,370 counting personnel, 17,875 micro observers, 9,625 sector officers, 4,840 micro-observers for counting.

COUNTER



"When elections are here, some people (leaders of Opposition parties) are again trying to portray themselves as well-wishers of the Muslim community. This is all deception. They consider Muslims as their 'vote bank' only.

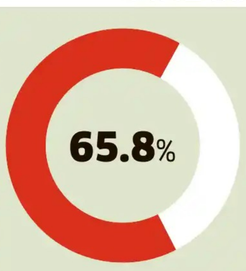
Nitish Kumar
Bihar CM

V/S

What they did with Eknath Shinde in Maharashtra, they broke the Shiv Sena, and after elections, Shinde was sidelined... Or what they did with Naveen Patnaik in Odisha, the same may happen with Nitish Kumar. They crush whoever they embrace.

Sudama Prasad
CPI(ML) Liberation MP

FINE MARGINS



160 seats, out of total **243**, were won by a margin of less than **20,000 votes**, indicating a highly competitive election across the state.

Margin of victory

Note: Based on 2020 Bihar Assembly election results only; excludes data from subsequent bypolls

Source: ECI

Poll diary

Tejashwi yet to come out of father's shadow: Tej Pratap

Former Bihar minister Tej Pratap Yadav on Saturday asserted that his younger brother Tejashwi was yet to come out of the shadow of their father Lalu Prasad. Jan Nayak is an epithet associated with giants like Ram Manohar Lohia and Karpoori Thakur. Even Lalu Prasad fits the bill. But Tejashwi owes his standing to Lalu Prasad.

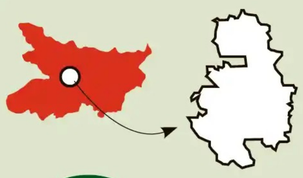
RJD MLC sparks row with remark on Waqf Bill

RJD MLC Mohammad Qari Sohaib sparked controversy, saying if Tejashwi Yadav becomes Bihar CM, "all Bills will be torn apart, including the Waqf Bill." Speaking at a rally in Parbatta, he urged votes for the I.N.D.I.A bloc. The BJP slammed his remarks, calling them proof of RJD's "jungle raj" mindset.

RJD leader Pratima Kushwaha joins BJP

RJD leader Pratima Kushwaha, who had earlier served as the chief of its state women's wing, joined the BJP on Saturday, claiming that "grassroots leaders are not respected" in the opposition party.

CONSTITUENCY WATCH



MAHUA (VAISHALI DISTRICT)

MUKESH KUMAR RAUSHAN
RJD
2020: Won

TEJ PRATAP YADAV
JJD
2020: Did not contest

Hope & doubt: Voters split on Tejashwi's 'jobs for all' vow

With just 20L govt staff & 2.8 crore households, questions mount over the Oppn's ambitious employment plan

FROM THE GROUND

GYANENDRA KESHRI
MUZAFFARPUR, DHNS

Thirty-year-old Rajababu Singh, who works for a tyre company in Hyderabad, recently came to his native in Bihar for Diwali and plans to stay back to cast his vote for the Assembly election on November 6.

Although claiming to be an RJD supporter, Rajababu is not convinced by Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav's key promise of providing government jobs to every household in the state. "I don't have qualifications. How will I get a government job?" asked Singh, a native of the Muzaffarpur district's Bochaha.

However, he emphasised that getting a job, whether in the government or private sector, within the state would be the best thing he could expect.

In the run-up to the polls, Tejashwi pledged to provide a government job to every household in the state. As per the recent caste survey, there are around 2.76 crore households in Bihar. Currently, the total number of government employees in the state is just over 20 lakh. Yadav, the I.N.D.I.A-bloc CM face in the state, has promised to bring a "Job Act" within 20 days of assuming office and implementing it within 20 months.

"Without competition and qualifications, how will he (Tejashwi) give government jobs?" asked Vinay Kumar Singh, who works as a Raj Mistri (mason).

In a similar vein, 18-year-old Md Irfan, who aspires to take admission in a top engineering college by clearing the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), sees the RJD's job promise as mere Jumlebaazi (political rhetoric).

REALITY CHECK

- **Current govt employees:** Around 20 lakh
- **To fulfil promise:** 2.6 crore more jobs needed
- **Estimated cost:** Rs 12 lakh crore/year
- **Bihar's annual budget:** Rs 3 lakh crore

Though the majority of people feel that providing government jobs to every family is not feasible, given the financial condition of Bihar, some argue that Tejashwi's announcement has brought jobs to the centre of the election campaign.

"Tejashwi is a yuva (youth) leader. He has come out with a new vision. We hope he will work with new energy and ideas," said Md Sadiq, an undergraduate student from Muzaffarpur.

"We want to live in Bihar and work in Bihar," said Shivam Kumar, a Class 11 student, adding that the new government should focus on creating job opportunities.

The incumbent NDA, comprising the BJP, Nitish Kumar's JD(U) and others, has promised to provide jobs to 1 crore youths in the next five years.

The ruling alliance has also mocked Tejashwi's poll promise by invoking the track records of his parents, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi, during their 15-year tenure as chief ministers between 1990 and 2005.

Addressing an event in Patna, Home Minister Amit Shah said Bihar has around 2.8 crore households, while the number of government employees is just around 20 lakh. "That means 2.6 crore more people will need jobs. Even if each job pays Rs 40,000 per month, Rs 12 lakh crore will be required—while Bihar's budget is only Rs 3 lakh crore," Shah said.

Bihar Road Construction Minister and senior BJP leader Nitin Navin has termed the RJD's government job promise as an attempt by Lalu's family to grab the lands of poor people.

"It's not a job promise but a land grab plan. We will not allow people to be fooled again," Navin told *DH* in an interview, referring to the Yadav family's involvement in the land-for-jobs scam in Indian Railways.

This poll will decide, jungle raj or vikas raj, says Shah

Accuses the RJD and Congress of corruption and nepotism

KHAGARIA/ NALANDA, PTI

Home Minister Amit Shah greets the gathering in Bihar's Khagaria. PTI

Home Minister Amit Shah said this Assembly election in Bihar will decide whether 'jungle raj' will return or the state remains on the path of development.

Addressing back-to-back election rallies in Khagaria, Munger and Nalanda, he slammed the I.N.D.I.A bloc for opposing the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, asserting that every infiltrator would be detected, deleted from the voters' list and deported to their countries.

"Rahul 'baba' says that let the infiltrators stay in Bihar. You tell me, should we let the infiltrators stay here? I want to clearly tell Rahul 'baba' that no matter how many rallies you lead for the infiltrators, you cannot protect them," Shah said, dubbing the 'Voter Adhikari Yatra' as 'ghuspetiya bachao yatra'.

Claiming that the NDA will return to power, Shah said, "Our government will handpick and throw out every single infiltrator from India."

He also said this electoral battle is "not about making someone a legislator, minister, or chief minister".

"This election will decide whether 'jungle raj' will return to Bihar or the state remains on the path of development. If the government of Lalu-Rabri is formed, only 'jungle raj' will come, and if the NDA comes to power, a developed Bihar will make its mark in the entire country," Shah claimed.

Good governance

Shah said due to NDA's good governance, elections are taking place in the state this time in two phases, while during Lalu Prasad's regime, polls were happening in six phases.

BIHAR VOTES

"Next time, elections in Bihar will be held in a single phase...vote for the NDA only," he appealed to the voters. Shah alleged that the opposition grand alliance has two identities — "corruption and nepotism".

"Both RJD and Congress are corrupt parties. 'Bade miyan to bade miyan chote miyan subhan allah' (the elder is a master, but the younger is a wonder)... Scams of more than Rs 12 lakh crore took place during the Congress regime," he alleged.

"Nitish 'babu' wants overall development of the state, while Lalu Prasad wants to make his son the chief minister, and Sonia Gandhi wants to make her son the prime minister, he said.

Will bring investments, set up factories: Tejashwi

KHAGARIA/BHOJPUR, PTI: I.N.D.I.A bloc's chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday said he would make Bihar a leading state in the country by bringing in investments and setting up factories, if the opposition coalition is voted to power.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in Parbatta and Alauli in Khagaria district and Shahpur in Bhojpur district, Yadav said he was fighting the elections not just to form a government but to build the state.

"We need to make Bihar number one, for which there is a need to bring investments, promote education and ensure proper health facilities," he said.

Yadav criticised Union Home Minister Amit Shah, claiming that the senior BJP leader has said that factories cannot be set up in Bihar because there is a dearth of land.

"We will set up factories in the state and bring investment to take Bihar on the development trajectory," he said.

Tejashwi Yadav with Ansari Mahapanchayat chief Naseem Nayyar Ansari during an event in Patna. PTI

The RJD leader claimed the government led by PM Narendra Modi at the Centre has not even set up a needle factory in Bihar. "He comes here only to defraud the people of the state. The PM sets up factories in Gujarat and seeks votes in Bihar."

Taking on the prohibition policy of the Nitish Kumar government, Yadav claimed the restrictions on the sale of liquor are just in name.

"While the administration is allowing home delivery of liquor for affluent sections of society, the poor, including women, are harassed through late-night raids. On the other side, rats are drinking thousands of litres of liquor in police stations," he said.

He charged PM Modi and Shah of "hijacking" CM Kumar, who, he claimed, "is incapable of leading Bihar anymore", asserting that the time for change has come.

Helpless train travellers proof of NDA's deceit: Rahul

NEW DELHI, PTI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday claimed that trains to Bihar are "packed" and tickets are impossible to get, with the journey becoming "inhuman" during the festive season, as he asserted that "helpless travellers" are living proof of the "NDA's deceitful policies and intentions".

"It's a month of festivals—Diwali, Bhai Dooj, and Chhath. In Bihar, these festivals mean more than just faith, but also a yearning to return home - the fragrance of the soil, the affection of family, the warmth of the village," Gandhi said in a post on X.

"Trains to Bihar are packed, tickets are impossible to get, and the journey has become inhuman...," Rahul said. The "failed double-engine" government's claims are hollow, he added.

Highly qualified women take centre stage in Bihar poll battleground

Most hail from political families, but are a promising signal for state

Lata Singh

Shivani Shukla

Shreyasi Singh

Komal Singh

ABHAY KUMAR
PATNA

Her father is a former IAS officer, while her sister is an IPS officer. She is a practising Supreme Court lawyer. Meet Lata Singh, a young candidate from Prashant Kishor's newly-floated Jan Suraaj. She is one of the several highly-qualified women in the poll fray in Bihar. Most, however, have political kin.

Lata is contesting from Asthawan in the Nalanda district, a fiefdom of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar from where the JD(U) has never lost a poll since 2005. It is also the home turf of Lata's father R C P Singh, who was Nitish's principal secretary before becoming a JD(U) Rajya Sabha member and eventually a minister in the Narendra Modi Government. However, he was later expelled from the party.

"I still have respect for Nitish, and it will remain. But he is not the same Nitish Kumar any more," said Lata, adding, "Through the Jan Suraaj, we want to transform Bihar."

No less qualified is Shivani Shukla, the daughter of gangster-turned-politician Munna Shukla. She is making her poll debut as an RJD candidate from Vaishali's Lalganj. Having completed her schooling at DPS, R K Puram, in New Delhi and graduation in law from Bengaluru, Shivani pursued a master's degree in law from Leeds University in the UK. "I am contesting as Tejashwi *bhaiya*'s nominee from Lalganj in Vaishali, which was earlier represented by my father and mother, Annu Shukla," said Shivani.

The BJP nominee from Jamui, former Union minister late Digvijay Singh's daughter Shreyasi Singh, much like Shivani and Lata, completed her schooling from DPS, RK Puram, before doing her graduation from Hansraj College in New Delhi and an MBA from Faridabad. She is the sitting MLA from Jamui. Both her parents represented the Banka Lok Sabha constituency. Shreyasi, however, became a national youth icon after winning gold in shooting at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

In a similar vein, the CPI(ML) Liberation has fielded a highly-educated Divya Gautam, who cleared the Bihar Public Service Commission examination in the first attempt, but preferred to pursue postgraduation from Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) before qualifying for her UGC NET to pursue a PhD. This cousin of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput is contesting from the Digha constituency.

No less qualified is Komal Singh, the JD(U) candidate from Muzaffarpur's Gaighat. She is the daughter of Vaishali's LJP MP Veena Devi and a JD(U) MLC.

Komal completed her graduation from Delhi University and MBA from Symbiosis. She was working with the Tatas before joining politics.

Ramadoss appoints daughter as PMK working president

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Nearly two months after expelling his son Anbumani, Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) founder S Ramadoss, on Saturday, appointed his elder daughter, Sree Gandhi Parasuraman alias Gandhimathi, as the party's working president.

The naming of Gandhimathi as the working president replacing Anbumani was not surprising, as Ramadoss has been dropping hints that he might anoint his daughter as his political successor.

"I have appointed my eldest daughter, Gandhimathi, as PMK's working president, a post I created. She will bring pride to Tamil Nadu," Ramadoss told reporters in Dharmapuri. He also appointed G K M Tamil Kumaran, son of his loyalist G K Mani, as the youth wing president.

S Ramadoss

Though Ramadoss has expelled his son from the party, Anbumani refused to accept the decision and continues to claim that he is the president of the PMK as he was duly elected by the general council.

The fight between the father and son has cast a shadow on the PMK, which wields considerable influence among Vanniyars, a dominant community spread across the north and central parts of Tamil Nadu. The split is also likely to reduce the party's bargaining power in alliance negotiations.

Anbumani, who was in Tiruppur, declined to comment on the latest development in the party. "It is the internal affairs of the party. This can't be discussed here."

It all began in December 2024, when Anbumani publicly accused his father of promoting dynastic politics following Ramadoss's decision to parachute one of his grandsons, Parasuraman Mukundan, into the post of youth wing chief.

Since then, the two have been sparring.

POLL STRATEGY

Muslim vote key as Jubilee Hills battle heats up

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

As campaigning for the Jubilee Hills Assembly seat bypoll in Telangana gathers pace, political parties are sharpening their focus on Muslim voters, viewed as a decisive factor in this high-stakes contest.

With nearly 1.2 lakh Muslim voters constituting a major portion of the constituency's 3.9 lakh electorate, the AIMIM's decision to back the Congress candidate is being seen as a potential game-changer for the November 11 election.

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi recently said the bypoll would not have a direct impact on the formation or bringing down of the current government, and appealed to Jubilee Hills voters to support Congress nominee V Naveen Yadav, describing him as a young and capable leader who could bring meaningful change to the constituency.

THE MINORITY FACTOR

- Nearly 1.2 lakh Muslim voters out of 3.9 lakh electors, a decisive bloc in the Jubilee Hills
- AIMIM backs Congress instead of fielding its own candidate
- Leaders like Mohammad Azharuddin, Mohammad Shabbir Ali lead door-to-door campaigns in Muslim-majority areas

With the AIMIM opting out, it is now a triangular fight between the BRS nominee and the widow of late MLA Maganti Gopinath, Sunitha, Congress nominee V Naveen Yadav, and the BJP's Lankala Deepak Reddy. The bypoll was necessitated by Maganti Gopinath's death.

The Congress has deployed prominent Muslim leaders, including former cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin and government advisor Mohammad Shabbir Ali, to campaign door to door in Muslim-dominated areas such as Shaikpet. The BRS, meanwhile, has stepped up efforts to consolidate minority support by inducting local minority leaders and projecting itself as the party of inclusive governance.

Strong presence

A senior Congress leader told *DH*: "The AIMIM has a strong presence here, and minority voters are responding positively to Naveen Yadav. His past association with the party has helped him build trust among Muslim voters. With the AIMIM's declared support to the Congress, we expect a one-sided consolidation in our favour."

On Thursday, Hyderabad Youth Courage founder and social activist Salman Khan joined the BRS in the presence of the party's working president K T Rama Rao.

Speaking on the occasion, KTR accused the Congress of hypocrisy and discrimination, asking why, despite reviving the "Indiramma Rajyam" slogan, the Congress government in Telangana had not appointed a single Muslim MLA, MLC, or minister. He cited the example of Shabbir Ali, who, despite being offered an MLC post, was denied a Cabinet berth.

KTR alleged that the Congress had betrayed Muslims and other marginalised groups, calling out contradictions in its welfare promises. Drawing parallels with Bihar, he remarked, "If Rahul Gandhi admits that Muslims were betrayed there, what about Telangana?"

Salman Khan, for his part, claimed that senior Congress leaders had tried to "buy him off" and get him to withdraw his nomination before it was rejected. "I told them clearly that I was not for sale," he said.

RISING CLOUT Sanghavi's elevation indicates BJP's move to address young voters

CM's deputy emerges as face of govt after big Guj rejig

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Having kept the BJP firmly in power for an uninterrupted 27 years, Gujarat's voters have witnessed only small political surprises in recent years, mostly when the high command shunted out chief ministers occasionally. The party bucked the trend last week when all 16 ministers in the Cabinet tendered their resignation in one go. The only exception was Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

A day after the surprise move, the ruling party inducted 25 ministers into the Cabinet, including 19 fresh faces and six former ministers. It is largely seen as an attempt to tide over the anti-incumbency and bring leaders with a clean public image ahead of the upcoming local body elections and the 2027 Assembly polls.

One notable induction was Harsh Sanghavi, 40, who was elevated from the post of junior home minister to deputy chief minister. With key portfolios such as home, industries and tourism in his hand, Sanghavi is set to play a major role in the government.

Thanks to his flamboyant image, Sanghavi is set to emerge as the face of the government, in stark contrast to Chief Minister Patel who has largely shied away from media glare since his surprise elevation in 2021.

The young deputy CM's first major task will be overseeing the 2026 Vibrant Gujarat Summit, a flagship event initiated by Narendra Modi when he was at the helm in the state. The job may not be an uphill one as Sanghavi has been representing the government abroad negotiating for hosting the Commonwealth Games and bidding for the 2036 summer Olympics in Ahmedabad.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah being greeted by Gujarat Minister Harsh Sanghavi on his birthday as Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel looks on. PTI FILE

A legislator from Majura Assembly constituency in Surat, Sanghavi was first made a minister in 2021 when Patel replaced the then chief minister late Vijay Rupani. Before getting the plum promotion last week, he held the portfolio of minister of state for home, a position previously held by Home Minister Amit Shah during Modi's CM tenure.

Since 2021, Sanghavi's clout has been on the rise. Whenever the government faced trouble, he became the go-to figure to take the media heat, whether it was over the Morbi bridge collapse, demolition drives at religious sites like Beyt Dwarka or the eviction of thousands, largely, Muslims, from Ahmedabad's Chandola Lake.

Sanghavi has also been at the forefront of several controversies, making headlines for his remarks on illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, 'love jihad', and giving the police a free hand to "teach criminals in their own language".

Observers felt Sanghavi had been taking up the issues that helped the party. "He is only following the party line and all these divisive issues make the BJP thrive. That's his politics," a Gujarat-based political observer said.

His steady rise in the party has been in the making for over two decades. Hailing from an influential Jain family involved in diamond business, Sanghavi has listed, in an election affidavit, his income as mainly coming from Aarush Gems, a diamond firm. The affidavit also reveals that he studied till 9th standard before dropping out in 2001. His education qualification has often been a subject to criticism, especially by AAP MLA and Patidar leader Gopal Italia, who is emerging as a key Opposition voice.

Sanghavi is known to have received his political break in 2006, when he was tasked with managing the media during the controversial 'Shabri Kumbh' in the tribal-dominated Dangs district of south Gujarat. The event, organised by Hindutva groups to counter the alleged religious conversions by Christian missionaries, attracted significant international attention.

"He's excellent at making connections. Name any significant incident or event anywhere in the state, he's likely to be there in person. This has made him the face of the Gujarat BJP for the current generation," said a senior journalist from Surat.

Last year when his father, Rameshchandra Sanghvi, died, Gautam Adani was one of the prominent figures who attended the condolence meet in Surat. Besides, he has worked closely with the BJP's leaders outside the state, such as Anurag Thakur and Poonam Mahajan.

Sanghavi's popularity and connections are said to have worked in his favour.

"Saheb is result-oriented, sharp and knows how to deal with people. He is good at organising grand events and unlike the public perception (that he is only 9th pass), he can speak fluent English," said a senior IPS officer.

BJP insiders claim Sanghavi has treaded carefully within the party's Gujarat unit which is marred by factionalism. "What is to be seen is whether Sanghavi is allowed to have his own way in a state which is controlled from Delhi. BJP has a tendency of sidelining leaders with mass support," said a political observer.

LIC investment in Adani is govt's mobile banking: Congress

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

KEY DEMANDS

- Cong wants Parliament panel to investigate investments in Adani Group.
- Asks why Rs 33,000 cr of LIC money was planned for Adani investments in May 2025; why Rs 525 cr of LIC and SBI funds were invested in Adani's FPO even after stock crash.

The Congress on Saturday claimed that the LIC investment of around Rs 33,000 crore in the Adani Group was the Union government's "mobile-phone banking" under pressure to help a company troubled by serious allegations of criminality.

Demanding a probe by Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) into how LIC was "literally forced" to make the investments as a "first step", it claimed that internal documents showed officials pushed through the proposal in May, and that the reported goals were to "signal confidence" in the conglomerate and "encourage participation from other investors".

The Congress based its claims on a "Washington Post" report, but the LIC said the report's assertions were "false, baseless, and far from the truth", and that "no such document or plan... has ever been prepared by LIC". It added, "The investment decisions are taken by LIC independently."

Seeking answers from the Union government on this and the State Bank of India's 2023 decision to invest Rs 525 crore in the Adani FPO, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the "real beneficiaries" were not the masses but PM Modi's "close friends".

"Does a middle-class person even know that Modi is using his hard-earned savings to bail out Adani? Isn't this a breach of trust? Isn't this looting? [sic]" Kharge said on X.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said, "Under whose pressure did Ministry of Finance and NITI Aayog officials decide that their job was to bail out a private company?"

He said the "costs of throwing public money at crony firms became clear" when LIC suffered a Rs 7,850-crore loss in four hours of trading on September 21, 2024, following the indictment of Gautam Adani and his seven associates in the US over an alleged bribery scheme to secure solar power contracts in India, he alleged.

4 minors detained after Class 11 student kidnapped at gunpoint

NEW DELHI, PTI: A group of teenagers allegedly tried to abduct a Class 11 student at gunpoint from outside a private school in Delhi's Greater Kailash area following a quarrel between two groups of students, police said on Saturday.

The victim was rescued after the police intercepted one of the suspects' SUVs on Friday.

Four minors were detained, and a pistol with 20 live cartridges was recovered. The incident stemmed from a minor altercation inside the school, which escalated into threats. The victim claimed the elder brother of one accused threatened to kill him.

Maha doctor suicide: 2 held; politician under lens

ON SATURDAY

- Main-accused cop surrenders at Phaltan Gramin Police Station
- Pune-based techie, son of landlord of house where victim resided, also held
- Doctor's 4-page letter, mentioning 2 assistants of an MP who pressured her, surfaces

MUMBAI, DHNS & PTI: The police on Saturday arrested two people — Sub-Inspector (SI) Gopal Badane and a techie — in connection with the suicide of a 28-year-old woman doctor in Maharashtra's Satara district's Phaltan tehsil.

The SI is accused of raping her multiple times, and she had written the name of Pune-based techie Prashant Bankar — the son of the landlord of the house where the victim resided — on her palm, accusing him of mental harassment, before ending her life. Meanwhile, her family conducted her last rites around midnight on Friday.

Badane, who was absconding, surrendered at the Phaltan Gramin Police Station and was taken into custody, said a senior police official.

'Imagine her agony'

Earlier, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is also the state home minister, said whoever was involved would not be spared. "Imagine the agony she faced... The accused (police officer) was immediately suspended... Unfortunately, the Opposition is politicising such a serious issue," he said.

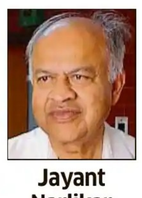
In a four-page letter that surfaced recently, she accused the cops of pressuring her to issue fake fitness certificates.

She wrote: "Two personal assistants of an MP arrived at the hospital and spoke to me in abusive language. They said, 'The MP is angry,' and pressured me to release an accused immediately."

(*If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help*)

Narlikar selected posthumously for Vigyan Ratna Puraskar

NEW DELHI, PTI: India's most celebrated astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar, who passed away in May, was on Saturday selected for the Vigyan Ratna Puraskar, the country's top science award.



Jayant Narlikar

Narlikar challenged the Big Bang theory, which states that the universe was created in a single moment. He, along with British astronomer Fred Hoyle, proposed that the universe had always existed with continuous creation of new matter into infinity.

Narlikar died on May 20 at the age of 86.

Noted agriculture scientist Gyanendra Pratap Singh, popularly known as the wheat breeder, won the Vigyan Shri award. Yusuf Mohammad Seikh, Director of the physics group of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, won the Vigyan Shri.

Kurnool tragedy: Bike skidded & rider died before collision with bus, say cops

Probe reveals bus flouted almost all safety norms

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Driver fled through passenger door

The driver of the ill-fated Bengaluru-bound bus had escaped the inferno by jumping out through the passenger door and failed to gauge the situation, a police official said on Saturday.

Currently, both the driver, Miriyala Lakshmaiah (42) and the additional driver are in police custody.

"Once the fire started (and) the bus came to a halt, he (Lakshmaiah) jumped out through the passenger door," Kurnool SP Vikrant Patil said.

CHAIN OF EVENTS

- CCTV highlights erratic driving in petrol bunk
- Police suspect driver may have been intoxicated
- Driver hits road divider and dies on the spot

In a twist to the Kurnool bus tragedy, it has now emerged that the man whose bike triggered the inferno that killed 19 passengers on Friday had died before the bus dragged his vehicle.

According to Kurnool police, the bike involved in the accident was driven by Siva Sankar, and his friend, Yerriswami alias Nani, was riding pillion.

CCTV footage from a petrol bunk a few km from the mishap site showed Sankar calling out to the attendants frantically. The bike then skidded inside the bunk, leading police to suspect that Sankar may have been intoxicated.

A preliminary investigation revealed that Siva Sankar and Yerriswami refuelled for Rs 300 and left. Near Chinnatekur, Sankar lost control and hit a road divider and succumbed to injuries. Yerriswami escaped with minor injuries and fled the scene.

"The bike on which they were traveling stopped at the HP petrol bunk near the Kia showroom around 2.24 am. Thereafter, Siva Sankar lost control of the bike and hit the divider on the highway. Yerriswami attempted to move the bike, but the bus hit the vehicle and dragged it," said Kurnool SP Vikrant Patil.

As flames erupted, Yerriswami panicked and fled the scene. After examining the footage, the police took him into custody.

Initial inspection by the Andhra Pradesh Road Transport Authority has revealed that V Kaveri Travels flouted almost all safety norms.

Kurnool range DIG Koya Praveen on Saturday said the police had shared preliminary details on Friday based on the statement given by the R Kaveri Travels bus driver.

"However, after obtaining the CCTV footage we spoke to Yerriswami. Based on the accounts of Yetriswami and the driver, we got clarity about what truly happened. Before the bus arrived on the scene, Shankar's bike had already met with an accident and he was died. Yerriswami moved the body off the road, but before he could move the bike, the bus collided with it and it was dragged," the DIG said.

The DIG also said one person boarded the bus in Hyderabad and efforts are on to trace him.

Bus overturns

A day after the Kurnool tragedy, an electric bus overturned on the Outer Ring Road in Hyderabad. Around 20 passengers escaped with minor injuries. Reports indicate that the accident occurred when the driver failed to negotiate a curve.

Vijay to meet kin of stampede victims in Mamallapuram

CHENNAI, DHNS: Nearly a month after 41 people died in a stampede at his rally in Karur, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief Vijay is likely to meet the families of the victims on October 27 in Mamallapuram.

The decision to bring the families to Mamallapuram was taken after the efforts by TVK and Vijay's camp to organise the meeting in Karur or Namakkal failed.

"Vijay going to Karur was our first choice, but it is not happening for many reasons. We don't want any controversy or issues over his visit to Karur. After considering many options, we have now decided to bring the families to Chennai," a source told *DH*.

The source added that Vijay will meet the families at a resort in Mamallapuram on Monday and spend time with them.

Punjab: Drug-addict couple sell infant; arrested

CHANDIGARH, PTI: A couple, allegedly addicted to drugs, sold their six-month-old son to a scrap dealer in Punjab's Mansa district, police said on Saturday.

The case came to light after the child's maternal aunt approached the police, an official said.

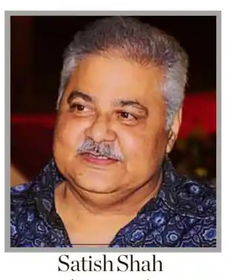
The police have recovered the child and booked both families under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The officer said the couple has been arrested.

The couple, residents of Akbarpur Khudal village, was allegedly addicted to drugs and was unable to raise the child. Subsequently, they gave the six-month-old to the family of the scrap dealer in Budhlada town for Rs 1.80 lakh, according to the police.

The scrap dealer has four daughters. The families even signed a document, which they called an "adoption deed" for the child.

Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro: Satish Shah takes his final bow

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS



Satish Shah
(1951-2025)

Veteran actor Satish Shah — known for his iconic roles in films like *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro* and television serials like *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* and *Sarabhai vs Sarabhai*, passed away in Mumbai on Saturday. He was 74.

Shah's death came close on the heels of those of actor-comedian Govardhan Asrani and adman Piyush Pandey this week.

The Cine and Cine & TV Artistes' Association (CINTAA), Indian Film and Television Directors' Association (IFTDA), and the All Indian Cine Workers Association condoled Shah's death.

"CINTAA expresses its condolences on the demise of Satish Shah, who was our member since 1985," said the film industry's apex body.

"His immense contribution to the Indian film and television industry will always be remembered. Today, the entire film fraternity is in deep shock and grief — it truly marks the end of an era in Indian cinema," said AICWE. "It seems he passed away from a heart attack. However, we are awaiting the final reports from the doctor," said Shah's personal assistant Ramesh Kadatala.

Born on June 25, 1951, Shah hailed from a Kutchi-Gujarati family from Mandvi and completed his education from St Xavier College in Mumbai. After that, he joined the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune.

Shah began his film journey with a small part in the 1970 film *Bhagwan Parshuram*, and gained prominence after *Umrao Jaan* and *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyun Aata Hai*.

He was best known for his comic roles in films including *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro* (1983), *Main Hoon Na* (2004), *Kal Ho Na Ho* (2003), *Fanaa* (2006), and *Om Shanti Om* (2007).

In the Kundan Shah-directed *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* (1984), which aired on Doordarshan, he played over 50 characters, acting alongside the late Shafi Inamdar, Swaroop Sampat, and Rakesh Bedi.

In *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro*, he played the role of municipal commissioner D'Mello alongside legends like Om Puri, Naseeruddin Shah, Pankaj Kapur, the late Ravi Baswani, the late Bhakti Barve, and the late Satish Kaushik.

In the 1990s, he appeared in sitcoms like *Filmi Chakkar* and *Ghar Jamai*. His character of Indravardhan Sarabhai in the cult hit sitcom *Sarabhai vs Sarabhai* (2004-06 and 2017), is also fondly remembered.

In 2008, he co-judged *Comedy Circus* with Archana Puran Singh. He played supporting roles in several films like *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*.

Condoling his death, veteran comedian Johny Lever said: "Feeling extremely sad to share that we've lost a great artist & my dearest friend of over 40 years."

Cyclone Montha likely to make landfall in Kakinada on October 28

E T B SIVAPRIYAN & ARKADEV GHOSHAL
CHENNAI & KOLKATA, DHNS

Indian Coast Guard urges fishermen at sea to return to shore. PTI

A well-marked low-pressure area over the Southeast Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression on Saturday and is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm — likely to be named Montha — on Monday, making landfall the next evening between Machilipatnam and Kalingapatnam near Kakinada in coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) Kolkata scientist Sourish Bondopadhyay told *DH* that at landfall, the storm could have wind speeds reaching 90-100 kmph, gusting to 110 kmph, at landfall.

Under the influence of the weather system, several parts of Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha will experience heavy to very heavy rainfall from October 25 to October 29, said RMC Chennai. This is the first cyclone to be formed in the Bay of Bengal after the onset of the Northeast Monsoon, the lifeline of Tamil Nadu.

At 8.30 am on Saturday, the RMC said, the system lay about 440 km west-southwest of Port Blair, 970 km east-southeast of Chennai, 990 km southeast of Kakinada, 970 km southeast of Visakhapatnam, and 1,040 km south-southeast of Gopalpur. By 5.30 pm, it had moved "nearly west-northwestwards with a speed of 10 kmph during the past six hours", said RMC Kolkata

"It is likely to move nearly west-northwestwards, intensify into a deep depression by October 26 and into a cyclonic storm over southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal by October 27 morning," said RMC Chennai. It is very likely to cross the AP coast on October 28 evening or night.

Though the cyclone will make its landfall in Andhra Pradesh, several parts of Tamil Nadu, like Villupuram and Chennai, continued to get intense spells of rainfall on Saturday.

CHINA SEES RED | Xi faces internal turbulence as CCP charts new Five-Year Plan

CCP's Fourth Plenum highlights political flux & economic strain

SRIKANTH KONDAPALLI

The much-delayed Fourth Plenum of China's Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee (CC) met in Beijing from October 20–23. Of the seven plenary sessions held during the term of a CCP congress, the fourth typically focuses on strengthening the Party and governance. At this meeting, the formulation of the 15th Five-Year Plan for 2026–2030, personnel appointments, and policy changes took precedence.

The session heard the work report submitted by CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping, followed by a 5,000-word declaration outlining the "decisions" of the plenum. These are binding on all party members and guide the CCP's and government's major work till 2027 and beyond.

Several past plenary sessions have been trend-setting. The Fourth Plenum in 1989, for instance, removed CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang for supporting the Tiananmen protests, paving the way for Jiang Zemin's rise. The 1999 Plenum reformed state-owned enterprises, while the 2014 session introduced law-based governance, tightening the Party's control.

One of the main outcomes of this year's Plenum is the adoption of the 15th Five-Year Plan up to 2030. Five-Year Plans began in 1953, and 14 have been implemented so far. Despite earlier debates between Deng Xiaoping, who favoured market reforms, and Chen Yun, who supported a strong planning system, the latter's approach prevailed—maintaining centralised planning with limited flexibility.

The previous 14th Five-Year Plan set targets for a "dual circulation" strategy to reduce export dependence and boost domestic consumption. It identified 11 areas for global leadership—high-tech manufacturing, robotics, nanotechnology, biotechnology, 5G telecom, renewable energy, drones, shipbuilding, trade, sports, and culture. China has since made progress in 5G, electric vehicles, and solar energy, though other sectors lag behind.

A sharp decline in economic growth—from nearly 10% a decade ago to about 4–5% now—and continuing tariff conflicts with the US have undermined China's prospects. The CCP's promise of sustained high growth now appears uncertain, fuelling socio-economic challenges.

The 15th Five-Year Plan, to be implemented from March 2026, focuses on two core themes: leading in high-tech sectors and expanding social welfare. It stresses innovation-led growth, AI Plus, commercial spaceflight, quantum technologies, a unified national market, carbon goals, marine economy, reducing inequality, housing, pensions, domestic consumption, and agriculture. Achieving these objectives, however, remains a formidable task.

Attendance patterns at plenary sessions often hint at leadership shifts. The Plenum was supposed to include 205 full CC members and 171 alternates, yet 23 full members were absent. Notably, 27 of 44 military members were recently purged for corruption. Eight of the nine expelled military officers were CC members. These vacancies have sparked speculation about leadership reshuffles, particularly as Xi has frozen the rise of the so-called sixth generation of leadership. Any political change is expected to be gradual and only visible at the next CCP Congress in 2027.

Chinese President Xi Jinping is served tea during the National People's Congress in Beijing. AFP FILE

Amid the ongoing tariff war with the US, the Fourth Plenum had to weigh domestic political tensions and "raging storms". Although the two countries have held four rounds of talks—in London, Madrid, Stockholm, and Geneva—the trade war continues to shake markets, investment flows, and business confidence. China has tried to offset these pressures by leveraging its monopoly over rare earth metals, expanding fentanyl exports, pursuing technological self-reliance, and diversifying trade partners. Yet the property market collapse, mounting local debt, urban unemployment, and slowing growth have deepened the economic malaise. In response, Beijing has begun imposing export controls on rare earths and other strategic goods.

Meanwhile, several sidelined CCP figures—including Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, and Hu Chunhua—are reportedly at odds with Xi Jinping. The recent purge of nine senior military officers, including Politburo member and General He Weidong, Admiral Miao Hua, and Defence Minister Li Shangfu, has left three vacancies in the Central Military Commission (CMC). Corruption in the armed forces—where promotions are often bought—has damaged morale and could weaken combat effectiveness. Tensions also persist between "princelings" (children of senior officials) and officers who rose from lower ranks.

Many purged officers once served with Xi in Fujian and Zhejiang two decades ago, suggesting his support base within the military may be narrowing. This shift has strengthened the influence of 75-year-old CMC Vice Chairman Zhang Youxia, a key figure at this Plenum. The meeting also nominated 67-year-old Zhang Shengmin as CMC Vice Chairman; he currently oversees the military's anti-corruption efforts.

The Fourth Plenum comes at a critical time, as preparations are under way for a potential "grand political bargain" between Xi Jinping and US President Trump at the upcoming APEC summit in South Korea. The discussions could take place before the temporary trade agreement expires on November 10. Yet, while the CCP's propaganda machinery projected stability, confidence, and "dare to struggle" rhetoric, the underlying reality points to an arduous journey ahead.

(The writer is a professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Trump aims to clinch deal with Xi during Asia trip

US-China talks in Kuala Lumpur seen as 'constructive'

AIR FORCE ONE, REUTERS

US President Donald Trump will test his deal-making skills on a trip to Asia, a region strained by his trade policies, while uncertainty surrounds his much-anticipated meeting with China's Xi Jinping.

Trump, who left Washington on Friday night, is embarking on a five-day trip to Malaysia, Japan and South Korea — his first visit to the region and the longest foreign journey since taking office in January.

The Republican leader hopes to secure trade, critical mineral and ceasefire deals before turning to his toughest challenge — a face-to-face meeting with Xi on Thursday in South Korea.

Washington and Beijing have increased tariffs on each other's exports and threatened to restrict trade in critical minerals and technologies. The trip was officially announced by the White House on Thursday, though details remain in flux, including the meeting between the leaders of the world's two largest economies.

Meanwhile, top officials from the US and China ended their first day of talks in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, with a Treasury spokesperson describing them as "very constructive"

US President Donald Trump speaks to the media aboard Air Force One on Friday. AFP

North Korea a 'nuclear power'

US President Donald Trump said he is open to meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during his current Asia trip, in what would be their first encounter since 2019, AFP reports. "I'm open to it," Trump told reporters aboard the presidential plane. The two leaders last met in the Demilitarised Zone separating the two Koreas during Trump's first term. Kim has said he would also be open to another meeting if Washington drops its demand that Pyongyang abandon its nuclear arsenal. Asked if he was willing to recognise North Korea as a nuclear state as a precondition for talks, Trump replied, "Well, I think they are sort of a nuclear power... They got a lot of nuclear weapons, I'll say that."

More than 60 UN members sign cybercrime treaty opposed by rights groups

HANOI, AFP: Countries signed their first UN treaty targeting cybercrime in Hanoi on Saturday, despite opposition from an unlikely alliance of technology companies and rights groups warning of increased state surveillance.

The new global legal framework aims to strengthen international cooperation against digital crimes, including child pornography, transnational cyber scams, and money laundering.

Over 60 countries signed the declaration, meaning it will take effect once ratified by those states. UN Secretary General António Guterres described the signing as an "important milestone", but noted that it was "only the beginning".

"Every day, sophisticated scams destroy families, steal from migrants, and drain billions of dollars from our economy... We need a strong, connected global response," he said.

The UN Convention against Cybercrime was first proposed by Russia in 2017 and approved by consensus last year. Critics, however, say its broad language could enable abuses of power and cross-border repression of government critics.

"There were multiple concerns raised throughout the negotiation of the treaty around how it actually ends up compelling companies to share data," said Sabhanaz Rashid Diya, founder of the Tech Global Institute think tank.

US slaps sanctions on Colombian prez

WASHINGTON, AFP: Washington slapped unprecedented sanctions on Colombia's leftist president, his wife, son and a top aide Friday, accusing them of enabling drug cartels -- and rocking a decades-old alliance.

The US Treasury blacklisted Gustavo Petro, first lady Veronica Alcocer, his eldest son Nicolas, and Interior Minister Armando Benedetti, banning them from travel to the US and freezing any US assets they hold. It was an unusual move. The sanctions list is usually reserved for drug kingpins, terror operatives and dictators involved in human rights abuses.

The rupture caps months of personal friction between President Donald Trump and Petro over US deportations and strikes on suspected drug boats off the coast of South America.

Kamala Harris hints at another US Prez bid

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI: Kamala Harris is not ruling out another run for the White House.

In an interview with the BBC, Harris said she expects a woman will be president in the coming years, and it could "possibly" be her.

"I am not done," she said.

The former vice-president added that she has not yet decided whether to mount a 2028 campaign. "I have lived my entire career in a life of service—it's in my bones. And there are many ways to serve," she said.

"I've never listened to polls." Harris recently released her book, "107 Days", which reflects on her experience replacing Joe Biden as the 2024 Democratic presidential nominee. She ultimately lost to Republican President Donald Trump.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Democracy 'alien concept' for Pak, must end rights abuses: India

Asserting that democracy is an "alien" concept for Pakistan, India has called upon Islamabad to end grave human rights violations in territories under its illegal occupation, where the population is in "open revolt" against military occupation, repression, brutality and exploitation, PTI reports from United Nations.

Responding to references made by Pakistan's envoy at the UN Security Council's open debate on 'The United Nations Organisation: Looking into the Future' on Friday, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, said. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir exercise their fundamental rights in accordance with India's time-tested democratic traditions and constitutional framework." "We, of course, know that these are concepts alien to Pakistan," he said. The envoy reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir "has been, is, and will always be" an integral and inalienable part of India. Strongly rebuking Islamabad, Harish said, "We call upon Pakistan to end the grave and ongoing human rights violations in the areas illegally occupied by it, where the population is in open revolt against Pakistan's military occupation, repression, brutality and illegal exploitation of resources."

US 'fabricating' a war: Venezuela

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro asserted Friday the United States was "fabricating a war" as Washington sent an aircraft carrier to the Caribbean, building up a military deployment there, AFP reports from Caracas.

"They are fabricating a new eternal war; they promised they would never again get involved in a war, and they are fabricating a war that we are going to prevent," Maduro told state broadcasters. Washington is deploying an aircraft carrier strike group to counter drug-trafficking organizations in Latin America, the Pentagon said Friday -- scaling up a military buildup that is fueling fears of war.

US President Donald Trump launched a military campaign in September, including 10 F-35 stealth warplanes and eight US Navy ships, in a campaign he said was aimed at "narco-terrorists."

UK Independence Party leader Nick Tenconi speaks to protesters during the "Reclaim London from the Islamists" rally in London on Saturday. AFP

Voting begins in NYC mayor's race

Polling places opened on Saturday for the start of in-person voting for two of the year's most closely watched elections: The New York City mayor's race and the contest to pick New Jersey's next governor, AP/PTI reports from New York.

New Yorkers are choosing between Democrat Zohran Mamdani, Republican Curtis Sliwa and former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat on the ballot as an independent. The incumbent mayor, Eric Adams, is also on the ballot but dropped out of the race last month and recently threw his support behind Cuomo. The New Jersey governor's race features Republican state Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli against Democratic US Rep Mikie Sherrill.

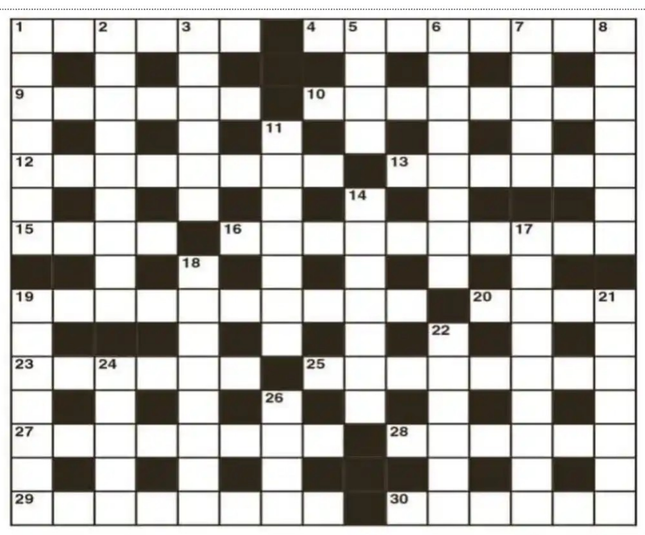
Pak warns of 'open war' with Taliban

Pakistan's defence minister said on Saturday he believes Afghanistan wants peace but that failure to reach an agreement during talks in Istanbul would mean "open war," days after both sides agreed to a ceasefire, Reuters reports from Karachi.

The talks in Istanbul, which began on Saturday and are expected to continue into Sunday, mark the latest attempt by Pakistan and Afghanistan to prevent a relapse into violence after the worst border fighting since the Taliban's 2021 takeover of Kabul.

Actor Rami Malek and Russell Crowe attend the AFI premiere of "Nuremberg" at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood on Friday. AFP

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2651 ◆



ACROSS
1 Splendid (6)
4 Avert (5,3)
9 King of the Huns (6)
10 Social gathering (8)
12 Operating (2,6)
13 Mark of disgrace (6)
15 Keep secret (4)
16 Submit after being disciplined (4,2,4)
19 Alert (2,4,4)
20 Nought (4)
23 Depressive influence (6)
25 Introductory statement (8)
27 Public records (8)
28 Motion pictures collectively (6)
29 Closing date (8)
30 Yearn (6)

DOWN
1 Abject (7)
2 Terminate effectively (3,4,2)
3 Recount (6)
5 Tense (4)
6 A calling (8)
7 Due (5)
8 Letters from devotees (3,4)
11 Canadian city (7)
14 Merrymaking (7)
17 Fair chance (4,5)
18 Curative (8)
19 Experienced veteran (3,4)
21 Alfresco (4-3)
22 Sheen on antique furniture (6)
24 Holiest city of Islam (5)
26 Average (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4011

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 9, Come-down 10, Sol(e) 11, ON-ward (rev) 12, Ang-ela 13, Tripper 14, To(o)-sh 15, S-hed a light 17, For sham-e 18, Inten-d-s 19, Stag (rev) 21, I-nside 24, Standing corrected 27, H-idd-en 29, Wise(Ys) 30, Shrimps 33, Fastness 35, Nothing new 36, Stem 37, Glacial 38, H-one-St 40, Rot-ten 41, Eye(l) 42, Over-look.
DOWN: 1, Count hands 2, Peke (pique) 3, Tot-all-ed 4, On stage 5, Slip of a girl 6, Four or five 7, Switch 8, Presumed 10, Shift 16, Die-hard 20, Ticks 22, Setting 23, In two shakes 25, Dinner gong 26, Depression 28, In ac-tion 31, Heighten 32, Sti-lto-n 34, To-ma-to 35, Na-I-ve 39, No-L-a (rev).

EASY
ACROSS: 9, Delicate 10, Too 11, Archly 12, Accept 13, Leopard 14, Evil 15, Proficient 17, Larkspur 18, Managed 19, Ergo 21, Addled 24, Taking to one's heels 27, Madden 29, Late 30, Presume 33, Overdone 35, Conclusion 36, Ants 37, Prevent 38, Velvet 40, Lean-to 41, Tot 42, Contract.
DOWN: 1, Redcurrant 2, Hide 3, Particle 4, Replied 5, For all to see 6, Balderdash 7, Access 8, Altitude 10, Trout 16, Franked 20, Roost 22, Dresses 23, At all events 25, Nincompoop 26, Somnolence 28, Advanced 31, Relevant 32, In stock 34, Rising 35, Cheat 39, Lure.

SU DO KU X - 3716

					8			
		3			6		4	5
			3					9
	9				5	8	6	4
							3	
		7					1	
		2						
								1
9				8	4	3	2	

SOLUTION TO 3715

1	5	8	9	6	2	3	7	4
6	2	3	4	7	8	5	1	9
4	7	9	1	5	3	8	6	2
5	3	1	8	4	7	2	9	6
2	9	6	5	3	1	4	8	7
7	8	4	2	9	6	1	5	3
8	4	5	6	2	9	7	3	1
3	6	2	7	1	5	9	4	8
9	1	7	3	8	4	6	2	5

To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Rohit not sure of returning to Australia

SYDNEY, PTI: Rohit Sharma has always cherished playing in Australia and after a challenging ODI series against the old rivals, the former captain on Saturday conceded that there might not be another trip for him and Virat Kohli to their cricketing heartland.

Both Rohit and Kohli now play only one format after retiring from Tests and T20Is, and their careers have become a matter of intense speculation of late.

On Saturday, the two legendary batters joined forces yet again to save India from a series whitewash with their unconquered 168-run partnership, leading the side to a consolatory nine-wicket win in the third ODI here.

"Always love coming here and playing here. Fond memories of 2008. I'm not sure if we'll be coming back to Australia, but we enjoy our cricket no matter what accolades we achieve," Rohit said after being named Player of the Match and Player of the Series.

Rohit hit a magnificent 121 while Kohli produced a 74-run knock in India's victory.

"We started afresh in Perth—that's how I look at things," he added, acknowledging the challenges of touring Australia.

Rohit also stressed the importance of experience and mentorship at this stage of their careers.

"You expect tough pitches and quality bowlers in Australia. Playing here is never easy. We couldn't win the series, but there are plenty of positives. It's a young side, and there will be a lot of learnings.

"When I came into the squad, seniors helped us a lot; now it's our job to do the same. We need to guide them, create game plans, and go back to basics, which I still do every time I play here," he said.

For Rohit, the connection goes beyond results.

"I've had great memories here — from the SCG to Perth. I love playing here and hope to continue doing what I do," he said, highlighting his enduring love for Australian cricket and its passionate crowds.

Kohli echoed the sentiment.

"You might have played international cricket for a long time, but the game teaches you something at every stage. Situations in the middle bring out the best in me. From early on, we've understood the situation well, that's what we've always done well (as a pair)

We're probably the most experienced pair now, but back in the day when we were young - we knew we could take the game away from them with big partnerships.

"It all started in 2013 (the home series against Australia), if we put up a big partnership, we know we'll go a long way in helping the team win," Kohli said. He also thanked the fans for their unwavering support.

ROHIT SLAMS 121 N.O. WHILE KOHLI HITS UNBEATEN 74 AS INDIA POST CONSOLATION WIN

Ro-Ko's last show Down Under
A SMASH HIT

DH NEWS SERVICE

Rohit Sharma's 50th international century and Virat Kohli's composed unbeaten knock carried India to a nine-wicket win over Australia in the third ODI at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday.

In what could be their final appearance together in Australia, the two senior pros produced an exhibition of controlled batting, guiding India to 237 for one in 38.3 overs after Harshit Rana and his fellow bowlers restricted the hosts to 236. Australia still took the series 2–1, but the evening belonged to Rohit and Kohli, who rolled back the years in familiar conditions.

India's chase began smoothly through a 69-run opening stand between Rohit and captain Shubman Gill. Once Gill edged behind off Nathan Ellis, Rohit shifted gears without fuss. The early drives and flicks off Mitchell Starc carried his signature ease, and when Adam Zampa entered the attack, Rohit went after him. A slog-sweep over midwicket and a lofted six over cover punctuated his control.

The Indian captain reached his half-century in 63 balls and accelerated thereafter, bringing up his 33rd ODI hundred -- and 50th across formats -- in 105 deliveries. It was a familiar display of timing, placement and authority, the kind of innings that seemed effortless yet assured.

At the other end, Kohli began cautiously after a run of two ducks. He opened his account with a single, then played a trademark straight drive off Starc, the timing as crisp as ever. There was a small smile and a punch of the glove; a release shot after lean returns.

Kohli settled into rhythm through quick singles and twos, gradually building tempo. A leg-before appeal against him on 36 went India's way after a DRS review, and the reprieve led to his fifty off 56 balls. His placement and running kept the scoreboard moving even when boundaries were scarce.

The association between the two was smooth and assured; a throwback to their vintage partnerships. While Rohit cleared the field with controlled aggression, Kohli rotated strike and guided the chase. When Rohit reached three figures, Kohli embraced him, a small but telling moment between two men who have shared countless stands.

Kohli finished unbeaten on 74, sealing victory with a boundary off Ellis. As the players shook hands, the Sydney crowd rose in applause, aware they might have witnessed the last of Rohit and Kohli together on these shores.

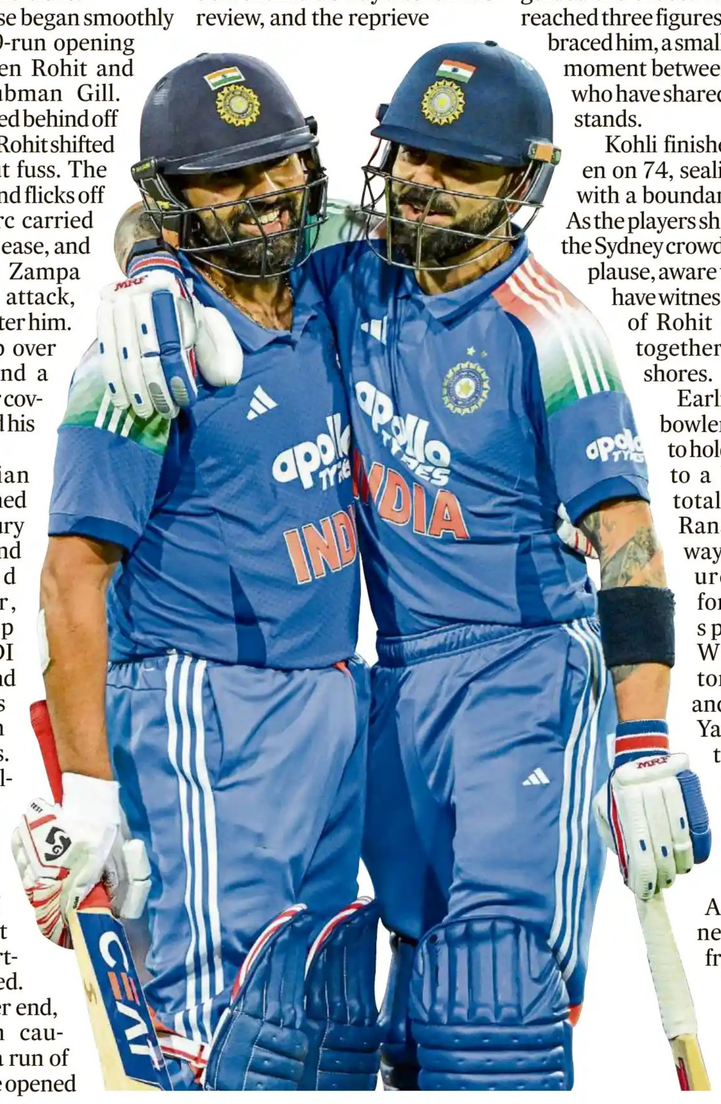
Earlier, India's bowlers did well to hold Australia to a below-par total. Harshit Rana led the way with figures of 4 for 39. The spinners, Washington Sundar and Kuldeep Yadav, maintained control through the middle overs, ensuring Australia never broke free.

The hosts started well through Mitchell Marsh (41) and Travis Head, who added 61 for the opening wicket. But once Head's cut off Mohammed Siraj found Prasidh Krishna at point, Australia's innings began to lose shape.

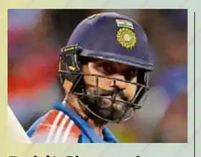
Matt Renshaw (56) and Alex Carey stitched a 54-run partnership, but Rana's strikes and tight bowling at the other end prevented any lasting recovery. Carey's attempt to loft Rana ended in a fine running catch from Shreyas Iyer, who had to leave the field briefly for medical assessment after the effort.

Renshaw fought to keep Australia afloat, reaching his fifty with just one boundary, but his dismissal summed up the innings. The lower order pushed the total past 230, but India's bowlers had already set the platform for their senior batters.

Brief scores: Australia: 236 all out in 46.4 overs (Mitchell Marsh 41, Travis Head 29, Matthew Short 30, Matt Renshaw 56; Harshit Rana 4-39, Washington Sundar 2-44) lt to India: 237/1 in 38.3 overs (Rohit Sharma 121 n.o., Virat Kohli 74 n.o.) by 9 wickets. **PoM & PoS**: Rohit Sharma; **Series**: Australia won the 3-match series 2-1.



Rohit Sharma (left) celebrates his century with Virat Kohli in the third ODI against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday. AFP



Rohit Sharma's 121* in the 3rd ODI against Australia in Sydney is his:

50th century in international cricket (12 hundreds in Tests, 33 in ODIs and 5 in T20Is)

9th hundred against Australia

6th hundred in Australia

31st century as opening batter

SYDNEY SIDES

Most 100s by Indians in internationals

100s	Player
100	**Sachin Tendulkar**
82*	Virat Kohli
50*	**Rohit Sharma**
48	Rahul Dravid
38	Virender Sehwag
38	Sourav Ganguly

Most ODI 100s against Australia

100s	Player
9 (49 Inns)	**Rohit Sharma**
9 (70 Inns)	Sachin Tendulkar
8 (51 Inns)	Virat Kohli
6 (64 Inns)	Desmond Haynes

Most century p'ships by a pair in ODIs

100 P'ships	Pair
26	S Ganguly & S Tendulkar (Ind)
20	T Dilshan & K Sangakkara (SL)
19	**R Sharma & V Kohli (Ind)**
18	S Dhawan & R Sharma (Ind)
16	A Gilchrist & M Hayden (Aus)

The 168-run unbeaten partnership between Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in the 3rd ODI against Australia would be the **19th century partnership between them** (5th century partnership against Australia). They are now the third-most successful batting pair in ODIs.

Compiled by **Arun Gopalakrishnan**

Gill to decide on Ro-Ko game time post SA series

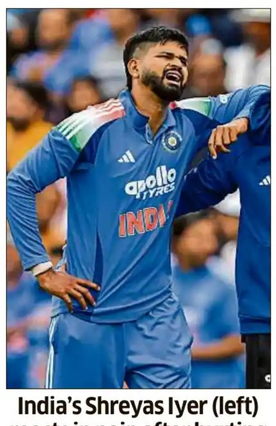
SYDNEY, PTI: Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will need a lot of game time going forward now that they play only one format but a decision on how the two white ball legends will stay in rhythm will be decided once the South Africa ODI series is over, skipper Shubman Gill said on Saturday.

Kohli and Rohit finished the ODI series on a high with unbeaten 74 and 121 respectively in the team's emphatic nine-wicket victory in a dead rubber against Australia. Asked if he has had a discussion with the duo regarding the gap of a month between now and the next series against South Africa and another seven weeks before New Zealand come calling, Gill replied negatively.

Shubman Gill

"We haven't talked about it yet. But I think once the South Africa (ODI) series is over (on December 6), there will be a gap in international cricket before the New Zealand ODI series (January 11, 2026). So I think then we will see how to keep the players in touch. Then I think a decision will be taken," Gill said at the post-match press conference.

However, with only six more ODI games (three vs SA and three vs NZ) left for the season, game time is an issue. The next international assignment for Rohit and Kohli is the SA one-dayers on November 30, December 3 and 6 followed by 50-over games against New Zealand starting January 11.



India's Shreyas Iyer (left) reacts in pain after hurting his rib while taking a catch to dismiss Australia's Alex Carey during the third ODI in Sydney on Saturday. AFP

Shreyas sidelined for three weeks with rib injury

NEW DELHI, PTI: India's new ODI vice-captain Shreyas Iyer might be forced to remain out of action for a minimum of three weeks if not more after he sustained a "jerk" on his left rib cage while taking Alex Carey's catch off Harshit Rana's bowling during the third ODI in Sydney on Saturday.

As of now, it can't be ascertained whether he will be fit in time for India's first ODI against South Africa in Ranchi on November 30.

"Shreyas was taken to the hospital for scans during the match itself. As per initial diagnosis, there has been a jerk and he will have to be out of action for minimum three weeks. He will have to report to the Centre of Excellence on his return. Further reports are awaited before one can conclude if he will require more time for recovery. If it is a hairline fracture then it might take longer," a BCCI source said on conditions of anonymity.

When asked about his participation in the South Africa ODI series, the source replied: "It is too early to say. If it is three weeks before RTP (Return To Play), then there is a chance that it could be touch and go before November 30."

The 30-year-old batter is currently one format specialist having taken a six-month break from red ball cricket due to his back issues and has not been considered in the T20 cricket for sometime now.

CRICKET WOMEN'S ODI WORLD CUP

India eye perfection

After struggling to semifinal, hosts seek to iron out chinks ahead of Aus clash

NAVI MUMBAI, PTI

India will have a final opportunity to iron out any flaws, especially while responding to pressure situations, when they face Bangladesh in their final fixture here on Sunday ahead of Women's World Cup semifinals.

The winner of Saturday's clash Australia against South Africa in Indore topped the points table and subsequently will meet India in the semifinal here on October 30.

A win over Bangladesh will not alter the World Cup hosts' fourth-place finish in the league stage.

India can get to a maximum of eight points with a triumph over Bangladesh but will remain behind England, who are placed third with nine points and can take that tally to 11 if they defeat New Zealand on Sunday.

Their existence in the tournament under threat, India came out firing on all cylinders to thwart the New Zealand challenge and booked a spot in the semifinals in a rain-affected clash—but one that did not truly test them to the hilt.

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur has scored just one half-century this World Cup. PTI

LIVE 3 PM, STAR SPORTS NETWORK

India got the best of the batting conditions in the first half to pile up 340/3 in 49 overs, riding on centuries from Smriti Mandhana and Pratika Rawal before the rains intervened, while Jemimah Rodrigues provided the much-needed impetus which was missing throughout at No. 3 with a brisk unbeaten 76.

Indian bowlers, who restricted New Zealand to 271/8 in 44 overs chasing a revised target of 325, were undoubtedly aided with the scoreboard pressure as the White Ferns failed to mount a challenge. Renuka Singh Thakur once again swung the new ball to snaffle two early wickets.

England vs New Zealand

Having already secured a place in the semifinals, England will be hoping to acquire some quality workout time for their batters in their last league match against a beleaguered and rain-tormented New Zealand in the Women's World Cup match in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

England vs New Zealand starts at 11:00 am IST.

Richa's fitness on track: Bowling coach

India bowling coach Aavishkar Salvi on Saturday said wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh is being monitored by the strength and conditioning team, adding that the players' workloads have been carefully managed considering the long duration of the Women's World Cup, reports PTI from Navi Mumbai.

India will take on Bangladesh in their final league match here on Sunday before their semifinal here on October 30. Ghosh's absence from the optional training session here on Saturday was notable after she suffered a blow to her finger while keeping wickets in the match against New Zealand two days ago.

"With regards to Richa's fitness, I think she is fine and the S&C team is taking care of it. They are still discussing, so I don't have the exact updates about it but she looks fine," Salvi told the media here after India's training session.

The optional session was attended skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and deputy Smriti Mandhana, who did not train, but those who trained included Uma Chetry, who kept the wickets when Ghosh had to leave the field against New Zealand.

King spins Aus win win over Proteas

INDORE, PTI

Leg-spinner Alana King's spellbinding wizardry formed the cornerstone of Australia's seven-wicket triumph over South Africa as the defending champions concluded the Women's World Cup league stage firmly on top of the table here on Saturday.

With the win, Australia secured the top spot in the league stage and will face hosts India in the semifinals at Navi Mumbai on Thursday. India, even if they win against Bangladesh in their final league game on Sunday, can finish no higher than fourth.

King's (7/18 in 7 overs) artistry was on full display at the Holkar stadium as the wily leg spinner ran through South Africa's batting line-up with her maiden seven-wicket haul to bowl them out for a paltry 97 in just 24 overs. The Australian batters then overhauled the target with 199 balls to spare.

SEMIFINAL LINE-UP

- England vs S Africa (Nov 29, Guwahati)
- India vs Australia (Nov 30, Navi Mumbai)

King produced a masterclass in control and guile, returning with her career-best figures in women's ODIs. Her effort not only marked the best-ever by an Australian bowler in WODIs but also the best individual bowling performance in a Women's World Cup match.

Chasing the modest target, Australia stumbled initially with opener Phoebe Litchfield (5) and veteran Ellyse Perry (0) falling early, as South African bowlers briefly extended the contest.

Brief scores: South Africa: 97 all out in 24 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 31, Sinalo Jafta 29; Alana King 7-18) lt to Australia: 98/3 in 16.5 overs (Georgia Voll 38 n.o., Beth Mooney 42). **Result:** Australia won by seven wickets. **PoM:** Alana King.

Team	Played	Won	Lost	N/R	NRR	Points
Australia (Q)	7	**6**	0	1	**+2.102**	13
S Africa (Q)	7	**5**	2	0	**-0.379**	10
England (Q)	6	**4**	1	1	**+1.024**	9
India (Q)	**6**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**+0.628**	**6**
Sri Lanka	7	**1**	3	3	**-1.035**	5
New Zealand	6	**1**	3	2	**-0.490**	4
Pakistan	7	**0**	4	3	**-2.651**	3
Bangladesh	6	**1**	5	0	**-0.578**	2

Jannik Sinner

Sinner storms into 8th final of the season

VIENNA, AFP: Jannik Sinner beat Alex de Minaur in straight sets at the Vienna Open on Saturday to reach his eighth final of the year. The Italian downed De Minaur 6-3, 6-4 to record his 12th win in as many meetings with the Australian and will play Alexander Zverev or Lorenzo Musetti for the title.

Sinner, 24, is chasing his fourth title of the campaign following wins at the Australian Open, Wimbledon, and in Beijing earlier this month. He is trying to stay in the hunt with Carlos Alcaraz for the year-end number one ranking, with both players in the draw for the final Masters 1000 event of the season in Paris next week.

Sinner retired after suffering from cramps at the Shanghai Masters three weeks ago but has yet to drop a set during his run to the final in Vienna, where he triumphed in 2023. He had not even faced a break point at the tournament until meeting De Minaur.

Rybakina injured

Elena Rybakina pulled out injured ahead of her Pan Pacific Open semi-final on Saturday, putting Linda Noskova into a title decider against Belinda Bencic.

Switzerland's Bencic defeated Sofia Kenin of the United States in a three-set battle in the other semi-final in Tokyo. Moscow-born Kazakh Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion and second seed in the Japanese capital, secured her spot in the season-ending WTA Finals on Friday.

Williamson to be picky about ties

WELLINGTON, AFP: Batting great Kane Williamson **(in pic)** says a changed "life situation" will reduce his availability for New Zealand as he prepares for his first international match since March.

Former captain Williamson will take part in the three-match ODI series against England starting in Mount Maunganui on Sunday, having been unavailable for New Zealand in any format since they lost the final of the Champions Trophy against India in March.

In that period the 35-year-old batter missed a Test series in Zimbabwe and home T20 series this month against Australia and England. Speaking ahead of the England series, Williamson said his international availability is limited by a desire to spend more time with his young family, as well as play in lucrative professional leagues.

"As your life situation changes, as mine has, the balance between where you spend your time and give your attention is really important."

Verstappen tops FP2 as McLaren falter

MEXICO CITY, AFP

Max Verstappen topped the times for Red Bull ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc as McLaren's title duellists struggled to match their pace in Friday's second practice at the Mexico City Grand Prix.

The four-time world champion kept the pressure on as he clocked a best lap of one minute and 17.392 seconds to outpace the Monegasque by 0.153 seconds with Mercedes teenage rookie Kimi Antonelli third ahead of Lando Norris in the leading McLaren.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen in action during the practice session in Mexico City on Saturday. REUTERS

Lewis Hamilton was fifth in the second Ferrari, 0.300 off the pace, but maintaining the improvement of recent weeks. But series leader Oscar Piastri struggled to make an impression in his once-supreme McLaren and wound up 12th, eight-tenths adrift of Verstappen, whose recent run of hot form has lifted him to within 40 points of the Australian.

Norris, second in the title race, is 14 points behind Piastri, but both are hampered by McLaren's decision to stop updating their car while Red Bull and Ferrari continue to develop and catch them.

BCCI to revisit safety protocols: Saikia

The BCCI on Saturday strongly condemned the alleged stalking and molestation incident involving two Australian women's team cricketers promising to revisit its safety protocols and further tighten the security ahead of the knock-out stage of the World Cup, reports PTI.

"It is a very condemnable but stray incident. India is known for its hospitality and care. We have zero tolerance for such incidents," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement.

"We assure to revisit our safety protocols if required to further tighten the security." he said.

The Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association has also expressed its shock and anguish over the deplorable incident, stating that "no one should ever have to endure such trauma".

"As the host, MPCA extends sincere apologies to the Australian Women's team for this deeply distressing and unfortunate incident while in our city known for safety, grace and hospitality."

IN BRIEF

SWR thrash Postal 7-2

▸ South Western Railway posted a lopsided 7-2 win over Postal on day 12 of the Hockey Karnataka League Championship on Saturday, reports DHNS.

Results: South Western Railway, Hubballi: 7 (Bharath KR 25th, Kumar N 31st, Vinith 32nd, Jayavanth P 36th, Chethan MK 37th, Faran 54th, 58th) bt Postal: 2 (Rajant 52nd, Vinayak Bijwad 56th); DYES 'B': 3 (Pranam Gowda YM 7th, 55th, Gaurav Ganapathy 48th) bt Army Boys Sports Company, MEG: 0; Canara Bank: 1 (Pruthvi Raj GN 24th) held Sports Authority of India STC: 1 (Rakesh M 3rd).

Men's HI League from Jan 3

▸ Season two of the revived men's Hockey India League will commence in Chennai on January 3 with a clash between Tamil Nadu Dragons and Hyderabad Toofans, the organisers announced on Saturday, reports PTI from New Delhi.

The tournament, scheduled to be held in three legs across three cities, will culminate on Jan 26 in Bhubaneswar. The women's HIL will begin on Dec 28 this year in Ranchi with the final on Jan 10.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

Women's WC: England vs New Zealand **(11 am)**, India vs Bangladesh **(3 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar.**

First ODI: New Zealand vs England **(6:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network, SonyLiv.**

Ranji Trophy (league phase): Bengal vs Gujarat, Saurashtra vs Madhya Pradesh, Mumbai vs Chhattisgarh **(all 9:30 am, day 2)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL

EPL: Wolves vs Burnley, Arsenal vs Crystal Palace, Aston Villa vs Man City, Bournemouth vs Nottingham Forest **(all 7:30 pm)**, Everton vs Tottenham **(10 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

La Liga: Mallorca vs Levante **(6:30 pm)**, Real Madrid vs Barcelona **(8:45 pm)**, Osasuna vs Celta Vigo **(11 pm)**, Rayo Vallecano vs Alaves **(1:30 am, Monday)**. **LIVE on FanCode.**

BADMINTON

French Open Super 750: Finals **(3:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

VOLLEYBALL

PVL Final: Mumbai Meteors vs Bengaluru Torpedoes **(6:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network, YouTube.**

KABADDI

PKL (play-offs): Bengaluru Bulls vs Telugu Titans **(9 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

MOTORSPORT

Formula 1: Mexican GP **(main race 1:30 am, Monday)**. **LIVE** on **F1TV Pro, FanCode.**

CRICKET RANJI TROPHY

Karun holds Karnataka together

Shreyas hits unbeaten 48 after Goa's Arjun, Koushik run amok

Karun Nair (left) struck an unbeaten 86 while Shreyas Gopal remained unbeaten on 48 to steady Karnataka's innings on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group B match against Goa in Shivamogga on Saturday. DH PHOTOS/ KRISHNAKUMAR PS

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
SHIVAMOGGA, DHNS

A fiery spell from Arjun Tendulkar (3/47), assisted beautifully by a disciplined Vasuki Koushik (2/24), helped Goa topple Karnataka's top-order and then breach into their middle-order.

V Koushik

However, a late batting surge by a determined Karun Nair (86 not out) and defiant knocks from Shreyas Gopal (48 not out) and Abhinav Manohar (37) drove the hosts forward, taking them to 222 for five at stumps on the rain-curtailed first day here at the KSCA Navule Stadium on Saturday.

Goa's attack, which was relentless in the first two sessions, was unable to rise to the technique and class displayed by Karun and Shreyas and had to settle for a wicket-less final session.

Karun, who started off slowly, fabulously paced his innings; the right-hander saw through the period when moisture on the surface made life difficult for batters and then let it rip once conditions eased out, smashing seven fours and a six.

Shreyas, on the other hand, put his head down and got to work, showing batting capabilities of a top-order player, scoring 94 runs with Karun and taking Karnataka unscathed to stumps.

The start of play was delayed by an hour and 30 minutes due to early morning showers and it ended after 69 overs due to poor visibility.

The spin of the coin went Goa's way but their bowlers did not get them off to a desired start, but were stingy enough not to let Karnataka get away.

Mayank Agarwal (28) and Nikin Jose (3) opened and added just 15 runs in 12 overs in an attritional first session.

Goa's Mohit Redkar twisted his ankle during the 11th over, and had to be carried off the field as the bowler was unable to put any pressure on his foot.

Arjun drew first blood shortly after lunch, angling the ball in at Nikin, looking to move it off the seam. The result was a catch to short leg to Manthan Khutkar. Nikin was out after facing 48 balls, having gritted through the first hour.

After the first wicket, Goa sensed a charge and were positively chirping, with claps and voices from around the park. And that is when Shrijith KL (0) went fishing outside off and nicked it to the keeper.

Just when Karnataka started taking a few singles and easing the pressure, Koushik began moving the ball both ways and went in search of the outside edge. His length was full and lines, testing the edges.

The disciplined effort was rewarded when a frustrated Agarwal nicked Koushik to first slip, trying to open the face of the bat.

Smaran R (3), who wanted to be positive, could only manage an edge off Koushik, to have Karnataka struggling at 65/4.

"Playing against Karnataka, it was a bittersweet moment, a weird feeling but at the end of the day, it is cricket. I also picked up wickets, so I am happy," Koushik told reporters at the end of the day's play.

The recovery from Karnataka was swift and fascinating. Abhinav let loose, unfurling attacking shots that helped stitch a 63-run partnership with Karun before he fell for 37.

SCOREBOARD

KARNATAKA (I Innings): Mayank Agarwal c Snehal b Koushik 28 (69b, 4x4), Nikin Jose c Manthan b Arjun 3 (48b), Shrijith KL c Samar b Arjun 0 (5b), Karun Nair (batting) 86 (138b, 7x4, 1x6), Smaran R c Abhinav b Koushik 3 (9b), Abhinav Manohar c Koushik b Arjun 37 (64b, 6x4), Shreyas Gopal (batting) 48 (84b, 5x4, 1x6). EXTRAS (B-5, LB-9, NB-3) 17. **TOTAL (for five wkts, 69 overs) 222.**

Fall of wickets: 1-18 (Nikin), 2-26 (Shrijith), 3-47 (Agarwal), 4-65 (Smaran), 5-128 (Abhinav).

Bowling: Arjun Tendulkar 17-5-47-3, Vasuki Koushik 18-7-24-2, Vijesh Prabudesai 14-3-57-0, Darshan Misal 11-0-56-0, Mohit Redkar 5-0-16-0, Suyash Prabhudessai 4-0-8-0.

Group B: At Rajkot: Saurashtra: 258/8 in 82.3 overs (Harvik Desai 26, Chirag Jani 82, Ansh Gosai 38, Ravindra Jadeja 36, Parth Bhut 25 n.o.; Aryan Pandey 2-30, Kumar Karthikeya 4-84) vs Madhya Pradesh.

At Chandigarh: Maharashtra: 313 all out in 85.5 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 50, Ruturaj Gaikwad 116, Saurabh Nawale 66, Ramakrishna Ghosh 31; Jagjit Singh 3-79, Abhishek Saini 3-55, Vishnu Kashyap 2-44, Raman Bishnoi 2-14) vs Chandigarh.

At New Chandigarh: Punjab: 240/6 in 87 overs (Harnoor Singh 126 n.o., Uday Saharan 37, Sahil Arora 36; Nedumankuzhy Basil 2-37, Ankit Sharma 2-63, Baba Aparajith 2-48) vs Kerala.

Services' Arjun, Mohit make Ranji hat-trick history

Services bowlers Arjun Sharma and Mohit Jangra recorded the first-ever instance of two bowlers taking hat-tricks in the history of the Ranji Trophy in their Elite Group C match against Assam in Tinsukia on Saturday.

On a day where a whopping 25 wickets fell, Assam still have a lead of 51 runs in the second innings reaching 56 for five in their second essay here at the Tinsukia District Sports Association Ground.

Assam were bowled out for 103 with Jangra returning 4-2-5-3 and Arjun taking 5/46 in his 6.1 overs and in reply, the home team struck hard as they bundled Services for 108 with a slender lead of five runs.

India player Riyan Parag led the charge for Assam as he claimed 5/25 in his 10 overs and Rahul Singh took 4/44 to help their side bounce back in the contest strongly.

Brief scores (Group C): At Tinsukia: Assam: 103 in 17.2 overs (Pradyun Saikia 52, Riyan Parag 36; Mohit Jangra 3-5, Pulkit Narang 2-27, Arjun Sharma 5-46) & 56/5 in 21 overs (Pulkit Narang 2-16, Arjun Sharma 2-12) vs Services: 108 in 29.2 overs (Irfan Ali 51 n.o.; Riyan Parag 5-25, Rahul Singh 4-44).

Rohith ton earns valuable points for Secretary's XI

BENGALURU, DHNS: Rohith Reddy's big century helped Secretary's XI claim three points in a drawn encounter against Vice-President's XI in the KSCA U-16 inter-zonal tournament here.

Rohith's 131, laced with 15 fours and two sixes, allowed Secretary's XI to post 317/6 in 90 overs while Arnav Anil gave a helping hand with a knock of 65. In response, Vice President's XI were 153 all out, thanks to Om Agarwalla's five-wicket haul.

LOCAL CRICKET

On the final day's play, Secretary's XI stretched their 164-run lead from the first innings to 319 runs as the side reached 155/5 at stumps. Vice President's XI also gained a point from the draw.

Elsewhere, most of the matches were affected by rain.

Brief scores: At Jagannath Cricket Academy: Secretary's XI: 317/6 in 90 overs (R Rohith Reddy 131, Arnav Anil 65, Arsh 28, Sukruth J 45; Aarav Bajaj 2-51) & 155/5 in 34.5 overs (Ruchitaksh Indrekar 50, Arsh 36, Arnav Anil 32; Prathyush G Shetty 2-13) drew with Vice President's XI: 153 all out in 41 overs (Aarav Bajaj 54, Aakash Suresh 43; Om Agarwalla 5-30, Punith Lakshman Kumar 2-16, Akshay Ravi Sastry 2-37). Secretary's XI: 3 points; Vice President's XI: 1.

At the Sports School: Bangalore City XI: 239/8 in 83 overs (Arush Jain 65, Vedant Shaurya 50, Niranjan Ashok 46; Preetham H G 3-17, Gaurav MV 2-47) drew with Mysore Zone: Match called off due to rain. Bangalore City XI: 1; Mysore Zone: 1.

At Alur 2: Mangalore Zone: 132 all out in 53.4 overs (Yeshas Gowda BK 42, Davin Glenn Mascarenhas 26; Bhishma N 3-31, Gokul AM 2-22, Ayush Y S 2-12, Bhargav D 2-11) drwe with Shivamogga Zone: 127/4 in 46.2 overs (Guruprasad TG 60, Jnana Prabhu P 35 n.o.; Yeshas Gowda BK 2-28). 1st innings unfinished. Mangalore Zone: 1; Shivamogga Zone: 1.

At BGS: Tumkur Zone: 49 all out in 34.3 overs (Harsha S Shanke 6-3, Harishitgoud Totad 2-11, Leelakrishna Pedapudi 2-18) & 33/0 in 20 overs drew with Dharwad Zone: 174 all out in 67.5 overs (Hyderali Sayyed 45, Harishitgoud Totad 39 n.o.; Veeresh KC 5-29, Abhishek P 2-22, Shreyash S Depavat 2-19). Dharwad Zone: 3; Tumkur Zone: 1.

At CMR University: Raichur Zone: 171 all out in 67.3 overs (Mohammed Shamsheer 31, Amarnath Reddy 26; Neil Bhatnagar 3-49, Anuj V Onkar 2-20, Manish V Patil 2-18, Aadrith 2-13) drew with Combined City XI: 172/4 in 69 overs (Rohith M 84 n.o.; Mohammed Shamsheer 3-18). Combined City XI: 3; Raichur Zone: 1.

At IAF: Bangalore Zone: 144 all out in 64.2 overs (Rafa Poonacha Ballachanda 47, Suvik Gill 26, Yash Rajanna 25; Eshan Manigandan 4-34, Vikram 3-17, Samhith S Dixit 2-21) drew with President's XI: 142/5 in 65 overs (Akshaj Kathuria 50, Aaryansinh Chavda 25 n.o.; Narasimha 3-47). 1st innings unfinished. Bangalore Zone: 1; President's XI: 1.

Clasico chaos looms large

Madrid, Barcelona fight season's first battle amid injury crises & uncertainty

Real Madrid players during a training session on the eve of their match against Barcelona in Madrid on Saturday. AFP

MADRID, REUTERS

Real Madrid host Barcelona in this weekend's eagerly anticipated El Clasico with Madrid coach Xabi Alonso still searching for his best team while both sides grapple with a mounting injury crisis that has left them severely depleted.

Former Real midfielder Alonso faces his first Clasico after replacing Carlo Ancelotti, who departed for Brazil's national team in May following a trophyless campaign in which Barcelona dominated their rivals with four wins from four meetings.

Barcelona's superiority was emphatic, scoring 16 goals against Madrid en route to a LaLiga and Copa del Rey double, as well as the Spanish Super Cup title, as Ancelotti's Real Madrid finished the campaign empty-handed.

Alonso's tactical experiments have yielded mixed results. A humbling defeat to Paris St Germain in the Club World Cup semi-final and a loss to local rivals Atletico Madrid in LaLiga have raised questions about his project, with Real often looking exposed to counter-attacks.

Their star goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois has been forced to work his magic, producing crucial saves to help them secure many valuable points. Jude Bellingham epitomises Real's season, with the England midfielder still finding his rhythm after shoulder surgery that sidelined him for several months. On his first start after surgery against Atletico Madrid, he was one of Real's worst performers and clearly out of rhythm. Bellingham did manage his first goal of the season in Real's 1-0 Champions League victory over Juventus on Wednesday, offering hope of a return to form.

Real's attack remains a bright spot, with Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius Jr flourishing while 20-year-old Turkey international Arda Guler is experiencing a breakout season. They have won all but one of their 12 games across all competitions this season.

Yamal uncertain

Lamine Yamal is struggling with lingering groin injuries and faces questions about his work ethic and off-field distractions. The injury list makes for grim reading for both sides. Barcelona will be without Dani Olmo, Robert Lewandowski, Gavi and goalkeepers Joan Garcia and Marc-Andre ter Stegen, while coach Flick cannot be on the bench at the Santiago Bernabeu after receiving a red card against Girona.

FOOTBALL EPL

Sunderland shock fancied Chelsea in stoppage time

LONDON, AFP

Sunderland climbed to second in the Premier League as Chemsdine Talbi's stoppage-time winner stunned Chelsea, while Newcastle also struck late to beat Fulham 2-1 on Saturday.

Back in the Premier League for the first time in eight years, the Black Cats already look set to buck the trend of promoted sides being relegated straight back to the Championship.

Chelsea looked like they would be the side to go second in the table when Alejandro Garnacho drilled in his first goal for the club after just four minutes. However, with Brazilian wonder kid Estevao surprisingly dropped to the bench and Cole Palmer still missing through injury, the Blues lacked invention in the final third.

Sunderland levelled on 22 minutes when Wilson Isidor bundled in from close range after Chelsea failed to clear a long throw-in. The visitors comfortably held the Club World Cup winners at bay in the second period despite Estevao's introduction on the hour mark.

Sunderland's Wilson Isidor (centre) scores in their side's stunning win over Chelsea at Stamford Bridge in London on Saturday. REUTERS

Sunderland then landed the sucker punch on the counter-attack in the 93rd minute when Brian Brobbey teed up Tabli to curl perfectly into the bottom corner. The defeat leaves Chelsea down in seventh and any hope of a title challenge fading fast.

Newcastle secured a much-needed league win thanks to captain Bruno Guimaraes' 90th minute strike at St. James' Park. Jacob Murphy pounced on an error by Calvin Bassey to give the Magpies a first-half lead. Sasa Lukic headed in Fulham's equaliser just before the hour mark.

But Marco Silva's men fell to a fourth consecutive defeat that leaves them hovering just above the relegation zone. Guimaraes swept home the rebound after Bernd Leno had saved William Osula's initial effort to snatch just Newcastle's third league win of the season.

Eddie Howe's men climb to 11th and are within three points of the top four.

Results: Chelsea: 1 (Garnacho 4th) lt to Sunderland: 2 (Isidor 22nd, Talbi 90+3rd); Newcastle: 2 (Murphy 18th, Guimaraes 90th) bt Fulham: 1 (Lukic 56th).

T20 Trophy: Delhi too good for Karnataka

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka's Super League Group A campaign in the Senior Women's T20 Trophy suffered a setback as they were bowled out for 73 in 17.1 overs while chasing 118 against Delhi in Surat on Saturday.

Delhi posted 117 for 8 in 20 overs as Pragya Rawat (32 runs off 28 balls), Shweta Sehrawat (30 off 25) and Tanisha Singh (26 off 28) chipped in with valuable runs.

Karnataka bowlers Rajeshwari Gayakwad (2/17) and Sahana Pawar (3/11) shared the bowling spoils.

In response, Karnataka lost wickets early in the chase and struggled to build partnerships. Nazma Khan was the pick of the Delhi bowlers, taking 4 for 10, while Soni Yadav and Parunika Sisodia claimed two wickets each. Karnataka's No. 4 Mithila Vinod top-scored for the side with 24 runs while nine batters failed to reach double digits.

The team will look to regroup ahead of their next games against Vidarbha (Oct 27) and Madhya Pradesh (Oct 29). Only the group topper will progress to the final on Oct 31.

Brief scores: Delhi: 117/8 in 20 overs (Pragya Rawat 32, Tanisha Singh 26, Shweta Sehrawat 30; Rajeshwari Gayakwad 2-17, Sahana Pawar 3-11) bt Karnataka: 73 all out in 17.1 overs (Soni Yadav 2-7, Parunika Sisodia 2-13, Nazma Khan 4-10).

K'taka's Krishik bags hurdles bronze

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka hurdler Krishik M (**in pic**) bagged a bronze medal in India's double medal show in the men's 110m hurdles final on the second day of the South Asian Athletics Championships in Ranchi on Saturday.

His compatriot Manav R took the gold in the same event with a meet record of 13.78 seconds (previous record 14.21 by Sri Lanka's M Perera in 1998) while Krishik clocked 14.01. Sri Lanka's Ranatungage Roshan took the silver at 13.90.

Manav wasn't the only Indian hurdler to breach the meet record on the day as Nandhini won the women's 100m hurdle final with a record timing of 13.56 while Moumita Mondal took the silver at 13.81.

The previous record belonged to S Fonseka at 13.84 in 1998.

India's gold medal count surged to 12 as the hosts won seven golds on the second day. Sri Lanka trailed in second place with eight gold medals.

Shriya bags MMA silver, Bhumika sprints to bronze at AYG

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), PTI

India's Shriya Milind Satam clinched the silver medal in the girls' 50kg Traditional Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) category, while Bhumika Sanjay Nehate bagged the bronze medal in the girls' 200m event at the Asian Youth Games here on Saturday.

India have so far won 17 medals, including two gold, six silver and nine bronze medals.

Shriya lost the final to Kazakhstan's Amelina Bakiyeva. She had earlier topped her group with two convincing wins over opponents from the UAE and Kyrgyzstan.

This was India's second medal in MMA, which made its debut at the Asian Youth Games, following Veer Bhadu's bronze in the boys' 80kg category on Friday.

Later in the day, 16-year-old Bhumika clocked 24.43 seconds in the final to win the bronze. She finished 0.35 seconds behind gold medallist Chen Xinxuan of China, while Arwa Ashar of the UAE took the silver with a time of 24.14 seconds.

Shriya Milind Satam exults after defeating Kyrgyzstan's Mariiam Kubanychbekovna Akzholova in the semifinal. X

In boxing, India continued their impressive run, adding four more victories to their tally as Lamchemnba, Udham Singh, and Anant Deshmukh registered commanding wins on Saturday, following strong performances by Ahaana and Dhruv on Friday at Exhibition World Bahrain.

Leading the charge on Saturday, Lamchemnba defeated his opponent from the Philippines 4–1 while Udham followed with a flawless performance against Thailand, winning his bout with a clean 5–0 verdict.

Anant outclassed his opponent from Tajikistan with another unanimous 5–0 win.

MIND OVER MATTER Athletes like Kohli and Djokovic are programmed to succeed in intimidating situations

Hostile territory is their playground

Novak Djokovic

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Just ahead of the ODI series against Australia that started last Sunday, Virat Kohli spoke candidly about how the country holds a special place in his heart for helping him become the legendary cricketer that he is today.

Growing up, Kohli, like most cricketers, was completely mystified by Australia. The fast and bouncy tracks, the ruthless aggression the Aussies brought to the field, the hostile crowd that could unnerve even the mightiest... Kohli as a kid himself got a picture of how unforgiving playing cricket Down Under could be. While it's extremely intimidating for an average cricketer, the extraordinary are inspired by it. They, in fact, thrive on it.

"Growing up, watching cricket as a kid when we used to wake up early and watch Test cricket in Australia, you can see the ball flying off the pitch and the opposition in your face, and I used to feel, wow, if I will be able to step up in these conditions and against this opposition, that's something I could be proud of as a cricketer," Kohli told Fox Sport. "Even the Australian set up, how they played their cricket and how they were in your face all the time, intimidating and taking the game on, that was something that really inspired me to come here and do the same. Early on, I found it was easier to watch on television than be part of that hostile environment, but I am really grateful to all those times because that shaped me as a cricketer and as a person as well."

While the ordinary get fazed by intimidation and hostility, the extraordinary thrive on it; in fact, that becomes their adrenaline. Kohli, because the thought of proving himself in Australia was so deeply ingrained in his mind as a child, always upped his game Down Under. In 18 Tests, the 36-year-old has played in Australia, he has scored 1542 runs at a wonderful average of 46.52, including seven centuries and four fifties. Kohli captained the Indian team in Tests for the first time in Australia, and although the visitors lost the Adelaide game by 48 runs, the Delhiite's two centuries and the win-at-all-costs attitude, instead of settling for a draw, endeared him to the Aussies eventually.

Not just in Australia, but Kohli was at his best when he was provoked. Whenever he was needled by an opponent, he would come out all guns blazing against them and seldom failed at it. Over time, bowlers realised it's better to leave him alone, especially when the King was at the peak of his powers. Even when things were mellow, Kohli would find a way to stir the pot - confrontation was his catalyst for success.

Not just Kohli, but the sporting world is filled with athletes who relish adverse environments. Record 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic, for whom Kohli has a lot of respect, has often spoken about how he finds the extra gear when the crowd is against him. "The amount of pressure and stress is so much higher if you have a crowd against you. But (laughs) for most of my career, it was mostly hostile environments for me. I kind of learned how to thrive in that environment. And people think that it's actually better if they don't like me so that it kind of gets the best out of me in terms of tennis," the Serb great was quoted during an interview on 60 Minutes.

Basketball great Michael Jordan loved trash-talking opponents — sometimes his own teammates — and relished confrontational crowds. John McEnroe, Cristiano Ronaldo, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Daniil Medvedev, Kobe Bryant, Muhammad Ali... all of them were wired to perform when they felt the world was seemingly against them. They fed off the negative energy — contrary to most athletes — and turned it into a positive one.

It's one thing to perform under pressure, which is what athletes are expected to do, but another to have a fascination for hostile environments. So how is it that this bunch succeeds?

"If you look at the percentage of athletes that thrive in a hostile environment, if you're talking about elite athletes, there aren't many of them," Dr Sanjana Kiran, a world-renowned high-performance mind coach and sports psychologist, told DHoS from Singapore. "As long as you're human, anything negative will affect you, and rightly so. What they are able to do is numb themselves. Because even top athletes have competition anxiety. But the fact that anxiety, hostility doesn't affect them means they numb themselves to a point that nothing affects them, and that's why they are able to perform robotically.

Cristiano Ronaldo

"Elite athletes like to live in a sort of bubble. And also, they know that they're very elite and part of a very, very few in the world who can achieve such things. So when these things happen, like when the crowd is against them, or when the opponents are, you know, really breathing fire around their neck, that instinct to say that I am the best here is what sort of overtakes them. They want to be the best in the world and they feel that nothing needs to come in between for them to be that," explained Sanjana, who has worked with several elite teams and athletes.

So do these athletes train their minds differently as compared to others?

"A sports psychologist or a mind coach will not hand out mental resilience and toughness to you," reckoned Sanjana. "Elite athletes are emotionally sensitive but in a different way. What we do is help them understand the perspective of things, the mentality of what's serving them, and reorganise it. Reframe it, rewire it a little bit. Now these athletes have decided to be the best. So we just facilitate in unleashing that peak potential. Because they're very hardworking, super motivated, super focused, diligent, committed, it's different from working with a regular person. With the best of the best in the world, what's standing between them and their performance is their mentality. And these athletes who have a fondness for hostile battlegrounds are just built strongly — emotionally and physically. They are aware of it and have mastered unleashing it."

Sanjana, though, cautioned budding athletes from borrowing the template of hostility. "If you're looking for a hostile environment to motivate you, then that's not going to be okay on a mental health level, and that's not a good example to set because sports is meant to be a happy place. There's no harm in reaching for the stars. There's no harm in outperforming everyone in the world and yourself, but ultimately, your competition should be with yourself."

It's that competition within oneself to be the best at what they do, makes athletes like Kohli and Djokovic to tap into their inner beast when tough times come calling.

Virat Kohli

Shamrock claims feature event

MYSURU RESULTS

Shamrock, from the stables of Satish Narredu and ridden by Suraj Narredu, won the Mysore Race Club Anniversary Cup, the feature event of the Mysuru races on Saturday.

1. Hastinapura Plate - 1400M: Alluring Beauty (Namratha Rakesh) C Umesh 1; D Admiral (Hindu Singh) 2; Break Away (Faiz) 3; Pette's Choice (Prabhu Kumar) 4; Not Run: Gentaman's Word & Astrolger; Wb: 2-1/2, 2-1/2, 3/4L. T: 1-27.09. TB: Rakesh. Fav: Alluring Beauty.

2. Sri C Sashachalam Memorial Trophy -1400M: Gemini (Suchit Jayraj) J Chinoy 1; Double Vision (Pawan) 2; Tigerking (P Mani) 3; Golden Bird (Imran) 4; Wb: 1, 1-1/2, 2-3/4L. T: 1-25.76. TB: M Bobby. K. Fav: Gemini.

3. RM Puttanna Memorial Trophy - 1200M: Silver Quest (HS Chanadre Gowda) Rahul 1; Jade Mountain (Vinod Shinde) 2; Prince Of Wales (J Chinoy) 3; Razzmatazz (Kiran Rai) 4; Wb: 1/2, Shd, 3/4L. T: 1.12.33. TB: Vishal Yadav. Fav: Silver Quest.

4. KT Shamaiah Gowda Memorial Trophy - 1400M: Sea Of Adventure (Bipin Salvi) Salman Khan 1; Klimt (Sai Kiran) 2; Ultimate Blues (Arvind Kumar) 3; Aurele (Abhishek Mhatre) 4; Wb: 2-1/4, 1-3/4, 2L. 1-24.53. TB: Bipin Salvi. Fav: Klimt.

5. HP Vishwanathan Memorial Trophy - 1400M: Irish Coffee (CN Devayya) Alex Rozario 1; Kanya Rashi (Antony Raj) 2; D Gold Star (Sai Kiran) 3; Forseti (Akshay Kumar) 4; Not Run: Auspicious Queen. Wb: Shd, 1-1/4L, Lnk. T: 1-24.21. TB: Pradeep Annaiah. Fav: Divine Art.

6. Mysore Race Club Anniversary Cup - 1400M: Shamrock (M Ravi) Suraj Narredu 1; Siege Courageous (Antony Raj) 2; Snowfall (Yash Narredu) 3; Monteverdi(Hindu Singh) 4; Wb: Shd, 3-1/4, 4-1/2L . T: 1-23.14. TB: Satish Narredu. Fav: Siege Courageous.

7. Bottolanda Mittoo Chengappa Memorial Trophy - 1600M: Mystic Divine (Goodera Vasanth) Faiz 1; Freedom Touch (Pavan) 2; Baashaa (Sachin) 3; Anigraha (Hindu Singh) 4; Wb: Hd, 5-3/4, 3-1/4L. T: 1-38.06. TB: C.D.Monnappa. Fav: Yukikaze.

8. Sharan Lakshmanan Memorial Trophy - 1200M: One Diamond (Belliappa) Faiz 1; Dali's Gold (Alex Rozario) 2; Seiko Katsu (C.Umesh) 3; Natural Look (Ankit Pal) 4; Not Run: Kingsland and Golden Stride. Wb: Shd, 3/4, 1/2L. T: 1-13.84. TB: C.D.Monnappa. Fav:Natural Look.

Bengaluru dividends

I race: Rs 41w; 17, 20, 18p; Fc: Rs 338; Q: Rs 140; Shp: Rs 47; Thp: Rs 45; Tri: Rs 964 & 252; Ex: Rs 3,160 & 1,354.
II race: Rs 19w; 14, 10, 20p; Fc: Rs 57; Q: Rs 35; Shp: Rs 28; Thp: Rs 52; Tri: Rs 245 & 132; Ex: Rs 3,353 & 1,437.
III race: Rs 19w; 11, 58, 23p; Fc: Rs 1,646; Q: Rs 621; Shp: Rs 196; Thp: Rs 46; Tri: Rs 3,526 & 1,259; Ex: Rs 18,336 & 7,858..
IV race: Rs 92w; 28, 12, 18p; Fc: Rs 357; Q: Rs 142; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 35; Tri: Rs 1,014 & 724: Ex: Rs 8,120 & 3,480.
V race: Rs 131; 30, 13, 39p; Fc: Rs 1,349; Q: Rs 455; Shp: Rs 37; Thp: Rs 76; Tri: Rs 4,997 & 2,141; Ex: Rs 64,690 (c/o).
VI race: Rs 36w; 10, 10, 15p; Fc: Rs 69; Q: Rs 21; Shp: Rs 36; Thp: Rs 31; Tri: Rs 70 & 46; Ex: Rs 281 & 139.
VII race: Rs 65w; 20, 10, 23p; Fc: Rs 627; Q: Rs 206; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 41; Tri: Rs 1,858 & 1,791; Ex: Rs 12,820 & 5,494.
VIII race: Rs 45w; 16, 19, 61p; Fc: Rs 322; Q: Rs 229; Shp: Rs 55; Thp: Rs 104; Tri: Rs 6,762; Ex: Rs 16,596 & 14,225.
Jackpot: Rs 3,91,197 (c/o). **Runner-up**: Rs 55,885 (3). **I treble**: Rs 287 (19). **II treble**: Rs 4,541 (1). **II treble**: Rs 2,441 (7).

SHOOTING STARS

The Karnataka State Rifle Association felicitated international and national shooting medallists across various events from the state at the Yavanika in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTO/ BK JANARDHAN

Lakshya, Diksha assure medals

CHENGDU (CHINA), PTI

Talented shuttlers Lakshya Rajesh and Diksha Sudhakar set up a summit clash to assure India of a gold medal in the girls U-17 category of the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 Championships here on Saturday.

With top seed Shaina Manimuthu also reaching the girls U-15 final, India will have a chance to bring home two gold medals. The Indian contingent was already assured of five medals ahead of Saturday's semifinal matches.

In the girls' U-17 last four round, Diksha defeated Chinese Taipei's Yun Chiao Su 21-8, 21-17 in 27 minutes before Lakshya joined her in the finals with a 21-15, 21-19 win over Japan's Ria Haga.

Bengaluru's Lakshya Rajesh stunned the top seed to confirm a medal at Badminton Asia U17 & U15 Championships in Chengdu on Saturday. BADMINTON ASIA

While the two girls eased through their semifinals, Shaina was made to work hard for almost an hour by China's Yun Jie Yi before prevailing 21-12, 16-21, 21-16. She will now face Japan's Chiharu Tomita in the girls' U-15 final.

However, India's hopes of a final spot in the U-17 mixed doubles and U-17 boys doubles categories came to an end.

In the mixed doubles semifinals, Jangjeet Singh Kajla and Jananika Ramesh went down 17-21, 21-18, 21-16 against I An Chang and Yo Han Wang of Chinese Taipei. Meanwhile, Jagsher Singh Khangurra lost his boys' singles semifinal against China's Hong Tian Yue 21-11, 21-16.

Karnataka's Srishti enters semifinals

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka's rising star Srishti Kiran registered a commanding 6-2, 6-4 victory over the Dominican Republic's Daniela Esther Castillo Macario to advance to the semifinals of the ITF J30 Cabarete in the Dominican Republic.

The 13-year-old Srishti had earlier scored an upset win over second-seeded Russian, Arina Vansovich, in the pre-quarterfinals.

The youngster who honed her skills at the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA), is currently ranked No. 21 in the U-14 girls' category in India.

Argentine super star Messi's visit to Kerala postponed

KOCHI, PTI: The Argentina football team and star player Lionel Messi will not be visiting Kerala next month as scheduled, the event's sponsor announced on Saturday.

Earlier, Anto Augustine, the sponsor of the proposed football match along with the state sports department, had announced that the Argentina team, led by Messi, would play a friendly match in Kochi on November 17. However, Augustine announced on his Facebook page that the match will not take place next month.

"Considering the delay in receiving FIFA's permission, after discussions with the Argentine Football Association (AFA), it has been decided to postpone the match from the November window," Augustine wrote.

He said the match in Kerala will be held during the next international window, and the new date will be announced soon. Kerala Sports Minister V Abdurahiman said that Argentina's visit to Kerala depends on FIFA's approval. He noted that Argentina had scheduled two matches in November -- one in Angola and one in Kerala.

"They are playing in Angola, but no announcement has been made about the second match," he said.

MNK Rao beat Beagles 64-60

BENGALURU, DHNS: Hosts MNK Rao Park BC defeated Beagles BC in a close encounter 64-60 with Ajin scoring 27 points for the winning cause at the Karnataka 'A' Division League Basketball Championship in Basavanagudi here on Saturday.

LOCAL BASKETBALL

Results: MNK Rao Park BC: 64 (Ajin 27 points, Georgy 10) bt Beagles BC: 60 (Achintya 18, Pratham 16); S Blues: 76 (Ranga 15) bt Mangalore BC: 71 (Abhay 24, Prastik 18). HT: 36-38; Young Orion's SC: 80 (Abhishek Gowda 28, Sumanth 18) bt DYES Bangalore: 74 (Srinivasa 15, Kushal 15). HT: 32-41. HT: 30-34; JSC: 96 (Sanket 28, Santosh 26) bt Vivek's SC: 80 (Mukesh 31, Ganesh 21). HT: 51-38.

Red Bishop for Mysore Derby

MYSURU SELECTIONS

Pesi Shroff-trained, Red Bishop, to be ridden by Trevor Patel, is fancied to win the Mysore Derby, the plum event on the concluding day of the Mysuru races run over a distance of mile and a quarter at the races on Sunday.
First race starts at 1.00 pm.

1. Royal Calcutta Turf Club Club Trophy (Div-II) - 1100M: Sheer Bliss 1, N R I Millennium 2, Sunway Lagoon 3.
2. Delhi Race Club Trophy - 1200M: True Gold 1, Emeraldo 2, Amazing Storm 3.
3. Royal Calcutta Turf Club Trophy (Div-I) - 1100M: Immortal Beauty 1, Smile Of Beauty 2, Amazing Attraction 3.
4. Madras Race Club Trophy (Div-I) - 1400M: Bellavita 1, Knotty Affair 2, Ancient History 3.
5. Royal Western India Turf Club Ltd Trophy - 1200M: Golden Time 1, Bezawada Sultan 2, Maple Leaf 3.
6. Bangalore Turf Club Trophy - 1200M: Aldgate 1, Don Carlos 2, Knotty Blush 3.
7. Mysore Derby - 2025 - 2000M: Red Bishop 1, Miracle Star 2, Mahler 3.
8. Hyderabad Race Club Trophy - 1400M: Fortis 1, Knotty Scotty 2, Monterio 3.
9. Madras Race Club Trophy (Div-II) - 1400M: Tefillah 1, Star Symphoony 2, Vafadar 3.

Day's best: Aldgate
Jackpot: 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
I treble: 1, 2 & 3.
II treble: 4, 5 & 6. **III treble**: 7, 8 & 9.

Manika stuns world No. 12

NEW DELHI, PTI: Star Indian paddler Manika Batra **(in pic)** entered the women's singles quarterfinals after stunning world No. 12 Shi Xunyao of China at the USD 300,000 WTT Star Contender in London on Saturday.

World No. 43 and 16th seed Batra prevailed 11-6 11-4 8-11 11-9 over the fourth-seeded Chinese in a 37-minute round-of-16 clash at the Copper Box Arena. The Indian will next face either fifth seed Shin Yubin of Korea or ninth seed Cheng I-Ching of Chinese Taipei for a place in the semifinals.

The Indian will next face either fifth seed Shin Yubin of Korea or ninth seed Cheng I-Ching of Chinese Taipei for a place in the semifinals.

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PERSONAL

Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PRAKASH PADMAPPA KOTTUR,** residing at # 400, Jayram Building, 8th Cross, Thigalarapalya, Hoodi, Bengaluru - 560048, have changed our minor daughter's name from **PRATHIKSHA JAIN** to **PRATHIKSHA P KOTTUR** vide affidavit dated 23.10.2025 before notary Thippeswamy T, Bengaluru. Henceforth she shall be called as **PRATHIKSHA P KOTTUR** only

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHYAM PRASAD SHETTY KOMPADAV,** residing at No. 73, Prarthana, BHEL Offies Colony, 25th Main, Nandini Layout, Bangalore-560096, have changed my name to **SHYAM PRASAD SHETTY** vide affidavit dated 25.10.2025 before notary C.V. Earappa, Bangalore. Henceforth I shall be known as **SHYAM PRASAD SHETTY.**

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Mohammed Maqsood** S/o P. Mohammed Mustafa R/a House No. 46, Ward No. 28, Goldsmith Colony, Cowl Bazaar, Bellary-583 102
We have changed our daughter's name from **MAISHA FATHIMA** to **MARYAM FATHIMA** vide affidavit dated 25-10-2025 Sworn before Notary K. Veera Mohan, Bellary.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **DAFEDAR FOUZIYA MD ISMAIL @ DAFEDAR FOUZIYA** residing at No. 2-2-81/1, Androon Quilla, VTC: Raichur, P.O: Raichur, Sub Dist: Raichur Dist: Raichur, Karnataka-584101. Declare that the above names pertain to me and henceforth I shall be known as **DAFEDAR FOUZIYA MD ISMAIL** vide affidavit dated: 21.10.2025 before Notary Sivakumara. M.N, Bangalore.

I, PATTADA DIYA NANJAPPA Residing @Betoli Village, Virajpet Taluk, Kodagu have changed my name to DIYA NANJAPPA vide affidavit dated 23.10.2025 before V.P.Ramesh Notary, Virajpet. Henceforth I shall be called as DIYA NANJAPPA only

Lost

DOCUMENT LOST
I, **S. PRABHAKARA, S/o Srinivasa Reddy** residing at No. 53, Jigala, Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Tq. Bengaluru-562107 have lost the Original **Sale Deed, Document No. ABL.1-06444-2017,18 CD ABLD313 of Site No. 1680/ B5 HIG-1 Dt. 15.2.2018** of the obove Property while in transit. If found Please **Contact: 7022007963**

JUDGEMENT DAY

Crime, clemency and the grey space of convicts' rights

Nigam Nuggehalli

is a law professor who thinks that the law is too important to be left to the lawyers
nsnigam@gmail.com

In July, the Supreme Court, in *Shubhashankar v State of Karnataka*, brought legal proceedings to an end in a sensational case that must be familiar to the residents of Bengaluru. This was the case of a law student called Shubha Shankar, who murdered her fiancée with the help of her boyfriend and other accomplices, because her family had pushed her into an arranged marriage. The case resembles a whodunnit, and someone even made a movie out of it, called *Ring Road*, since that was the location of the murder.

The incident happened in 2003. In 2010, a trial court sentenced all the accused to life imprisonment. The accused appealed to the Karnataka High Court, which upheld the conviction. They appealed to the Supreme Court, which in 2025 confirmed the decision of the High Court. Here's where things get interesting. The Supreme Court held that, as a matter of law, this was murder. The accused planned the assault, recruited the crew, and tried to get rid of incriminating evidence. And yet, the court was not unsympathetic to their circumstances.

The judgement is striking – the first few pages are not about the facts leading up to the murder, but about the circumstances in which the accused found herself. She was a student in a law school, studying about the rights of citizens and yet, had little agency in the most important decision in her life. Why do people commit crimes, the court asked while setting a context, and discussed social and cultural circumstances that lead to a person doing something immoral and illegal.

Strikingly, after the court decided to confirm the conviction, it turned to the point of clemency. It said, 'We do not wish to end our judgement by merely rendering a conviction. We do believe that this Court has a little more role to play.' The court discussed Article 161 of the Constitution, which details the powers of the Governor of a state to grant pardons to people convicted of any offence, or commute their sentences.

It noted that Article 161 empowers the state to reintegrate an offender into society, once they have realised their mistake. The accused were in their twenties at the time of the offence; it had been more than two decades since the case entered the judicial system, and the conduct of the accused in prison had 'not been adverse'. The court stated that the accused "were not born as criminals, but it was an error of judgement through a dangerous adventure which led to the commission of a heinous crime."

It gave time to the accused to submit a petition seeking pardon before the Governor of Karnataka and stated, 'We would only request the constitutional authority to consider the same, which we hope and trust would be done by taking note of the relevant circumstances governing the case.' The court restrained the police from arresting the accused until the clemency petition was disposed of.

Regardless of the merits of the case, this judgement allows us to study the concept of clemency. Clemency appears to be a contradiction in terms. How can one part of the legal system decide someone is guilty and another decide they are not? The answer might lie in the nature of the law itself. The law recognises that adherence to a code of conduct does not always result in complete justice. In some instances, the law might want to mitigate its own rigour such that a person is treated justly by the state. English law, from which Indian law derives, achieves this in different ways, clemency being only one part of this endeavour. English law has always made a distinction between law and equity, with equity providing rights to people that the law would say they are not entitled to.

This brings me to my second point. The idea that one can recede from the law cannot be decided by the judicial system itself. The law recognises that such decisions must come from outside. Clemency is granted by the executive and not the judiciary. There must be a separation of powers, and the power of clemency is an exercise of political morality, not legal reasoning. Because the law takes a back seat, the process of clemency is obscure. Politicians make decisions based on public opinion and a sense of justice, but the process of decision-making is not always clear, and probably deliberately so. In the past seven decades, through various decisions, the judiciary has made it clear that it can review the decisions of the executive in cases of clemency, but this review is narrow and limited. When it comes to clemency, the law realises its own limitations and makes space for grey in a sea of black and white.

FEUDAL TO FEDERAL

The who, how and why of vote *chori*

On December 17 2022, at 9.11 pm, Suryakant submitted a Form-7 on the portal of the Election Commission of India. Form 7 is used to delete names from the voter list. Suryakant wanted to delete the name of a voter, Babita Chaudhari, from the list in the Aland Assembly constituency, in Karnataka's Kalaburagi district. To submit this form online, Suryakant had to go through an OTP verification. He submitted more forms to delete 12 voters in total, in just 14 minutes. These are details as recorded by the EC. But here is the catch. Suryakant told the nation, in a press conference held by the Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi in September 2025, that he never submitted any such form. So who did it, using his mobile number, and why did they want those 12 voters off the rolls?

In August 2024, in Kamthi constituency in Nagpur district of Maharashtra, thousands of Form-6s (used to add voters) were submitted online. At the same time, thousands of these forms were also being submitted online from other constituencies in the state. The only problem – nobody knew who these new voters were, how they were being added to the list, and by whom.

It turns out that in Aland, around 6,000 voters were sought to be deleted, and across constituencies in Maharashtra, more than 10,000 voters were sought to be added, both through fraudulent means. While the attempt was foiled in Karnataka, it escaped scrutiny in Maharashtra. The modus operandi, however, was the same in both cases.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) in Karnataka has now revealed that mobile numbers were distributed through a call centre and volunteers were tasked with identifying Congress voters in Aland for deletion. They were paid Rs 80 for every Form-7 submitted. The plan did not materialise because it was prevented by the intervention of an alert officer and the Congress candidate, BR Patil.

Unfortunately, this was not prevented in time in Maharashtra, despite Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders writing to the EC – in October 2024, well ahead of voting day – with a list of constituencies where voters were added fraudulently. The EC chose to turn a blind eye.

Praveen Chakravarty

is a Congressman curious about correlations, causes & consequences

@pravchak

The results are telling. In the Lok Sabha elections held in Maharashtra in April and May, the Congress alliance won 157 equivalent Assembly seats while the BJP alliance won 126. Just six months later, the same state saw the BJP alliance romp home with 235 seats in the Assembly election, with the tally of the Congress alliance reduced to 50. One plausible explanation for this could be that the voters chose the Congress alliance for the Lok Sabha but shifted their preference to the BJP alliance for the state election. But why did this trend not reflect in the voter numbers, then? Votes for the Congress alliance roughly stayed the same, while votes for the BJP alliance shot up by more than 70 lakh.

It is now abundantly clear that India's voter lists are being manipulated deliberately to skew electoral outcomes. From Mahadevapura in Bengaluru to Aland in Kalaburagi to Shirdi to Kamthi to Haryana to Uttar Pradesh to Madhya Pradesh, voter lists are riddled with suspicious additions and deletions before an election and, almost always, perpetrated by those associated with the BJP or its alliance partners.

Some commentators ask – can such manipulation of voter lists, large enough to tilt election outcomes, happen in a democracy like India? This is a naive question, considering there is increasing evidence that all it takes to sway the results is a few thousand strategic additions or deletions. This is particularly impactful in a country where small vote shifts result in large differences in the number of seats.

As the sordid saga of voter list manipulation continues to unfold, it is time to address the elephant in the room – the EC. It is ultimately the job of the EC to safeguard the sanctity of voter lists and the integrity of elections in the country. If the Commission is truly not complicit, it must come clean to provide digital, machine-readable voter lists so that there can be a comprehensive analysis. By doggedly refusing to do so, by not providing a convincing explanation, and worse, by framing responses with political undertones during media interactions, the Commission has only given credence to the allegations.

With ministers and BJP leaders rushing to the EC's defence on every charge it faces, it is only rational to conclude that the constitutional body is being turned into an institution that serves the political interests of the ruling party.

GADFLY

Retrieving slowness in the Age of Speed

I often marvel at *The Lunchbox* for the way the film captures time in 'maximum city' Mumbai. The story's resonance, to me, lies in its tone and pacing. For those who know it, do reexamine the conversation the senior Saajan (Irrfan Khan) and junior Aslam (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) have inside the packed local train when folks are returning home after a long day at the office. The strange, unhurried nature of it, where seemingly small life secrets are shared, kinship forged between an imminent retiree and a new employee of the same workplace. Later, we only hear, but not see Ila (Nimrat Kaur)'s elderly neighbour – who lives upstairs from her flat – dole out what condiments Ila should slip in or avoid or balance to enhance the dish she'd send to Saajan in his daily lunch *dabba*.

As someone who grew up in Mumbai and left it long ago, I can still vouch for some of the everyday magic that the film bestows on the watcher. It presents Mumbai as a slow city, a city of silences for those seeking it. It departs from several cinematic tropes and cliches that popular culture normalises in any metro. Similarly, in another mainstream film, *Taare Zameen Par*, when (then child actor) Darsheel Safary's character plays truant at school, the camera journeys along with him, catching the mess, the beauty, and the strangeness of his city. There's a striking shot of a sweaty worker carrying his child on his shoulders, and the camera becomes the protagonist's eyes, almost capturing everyday gestures of love. Elsewhere, through the form of the whodunnit, the Vidya Balan-starrer *Kahaani* becomes a paean for Kolkata's moods, nights, and colours.

Several storytellers of any of the big cities of the world have made a case for slowness, absorption, deep meditative reflection, even while you wrestle unremitting chaos. They revel in revelations in gradualness, even if their tales are set in breakneck metropolises. Great art and artists teach one to pause, to step back, to reflect deeply, to doubt, and to question what we read or watch, to access our innermost thoughts and recesses. We are losing such intellectual-emotional values rapidly.

Rahul Jayaram

teaches at the School of Film, Media and Creative Arts, R V University, Bengaluru

@rahjayaram

We're living in a time of unqualified and uncritical pedestalisation of ideas, notions, and habits that emphasise short-term achievements, immediate outputs, and quick outcomes over quality and depth that require long-term engagement, perseverance, and some level of comfort with discomfort, abstraction, and complexity. Evidence for this is aplenty in almost every sphere of human activity. It's sickening.

To me, the online social media reel, the 'invest here and now and prosper in the short-to-medium term' like schemes, that ahead-of-the curve 30-day degree in coding, or the 20-day Artificial Intelligence certificate suggesting a rosy future, are all discrete parts of a larger ongoing zeitgeist that pooh-poohs the long-term and glorifies the short one. They come at the cost of reading a high-quality, complex novel, play, epic poem, or yes, even deep-diving into the fundamentals of mathematics, sciences, or economics. The chase for the quick answer, the swift economic return, is premised on the fact that the individual need not put in that much effort, need not learn at a certain level of depth when there are machines and software to do that. Sure, these means are boons, but these cannot and must not come at the cost of individual values of learning, reflection, and absorption of high-quality knowledge across spheres.

These foes of slowness and purveyors of speed bestow us the impasse of the age: By waylaying the cultivation of critical thought and reflection-oriented responsiveness, the app-addled, AI-drugged mobile phone and social media of today, enable binarism in thought and action: If you are not with something, you must be against it. How can one not have an opinion on something? How can you say 'I don't know' as a response to a question about common but complex phenomena anymore? Ironically, the age of apparent hyper-individualism is selling to us an AI- and tech-led homogeneity. Indeed, if one were an individualist today, to some degree, one would be even anti-tech. Slow down, please.

STATE, MARKET, SOCIETY

Whose city is it anyway?

As the decibel levels of anger over poor road conditions rose earlier this month, the government indicated that it was open to letting some corporates use their CSR funds to maintain the roads around their offices, rather than complain. This raises the question – who should solve public problems? Over many decades, the government has maintained that it alone is responsible for this, because it alone is capable of doing so and can be trusted to do so in a manner that is fair to all citizens. Citizens and businesses can help, of course, but in the government's view, they should not have much say in deciding how to solve problems.

However, after having asserted its primacy over society and markets, the state has not been able to address a very large number of challenges. In the city, the evidence of this failure is everywhere. The roads, the drains, the public schools, the air and water quality, the power supply, the footpaths, the public transport, and so many other things remind us daily that the government is in charge, but not doing the job.

Not only that, many of these problems have persisted for a long time. Some things are better than they were in the 1960s or 1990s; nonetheless, by most human development indicators, at least 120 countries around the world are still ahead of us. Clearly, the go-it-alone approach of governments isn't working. So why not let some problems be solved by others? They will bring their expertise, some additional money and – most importantly – a lot more attention to local areas they care about.

This is not an altogether new idea, even in Bengaluru. For many years, local communities have managed parks and playgrounds in their areas. Others living around lakes helped maintain the water bodies. Tech expertise from several companies helped build our Traffic Control Centre, cheaper than in other cities, and faster. Global research expertise helped rationalise some of BMTC's routes. We got a few reasonably walkable roads in the city centre because the private sector brought in the necessary expertise.

Ashwin Mahesh

A social entrepreneur, founder of Mapunity and LVBL, and co-founder, Lithium, wakes up with hope for the city and society, goes to bed with a sigh

@ashwinmahesh

For a few years, a lot of such things were even formalised by an initiative in the BBMP, under the grand theme that 'our city is our responsibility'. Indeed, it is, although that approach now seems to have been forgotten. Instead, the government is merely telling businesses and citizens to 'do it yourself' in a defensive response to its failures, rather than embracing them as partners in problem-solving.

But it matters how we come to such a collaboration. It won't work if the government first fails to do what it should and then seeks support from companies or citizens to fix the deficits that arise. We saw that in the Sarjapur Road case, when the government asked Wipro to give up land to help fix local traffic chaos, only to be reminded that it had failed to properly develop the area in a planned way.

I was at a workshop on climate challenges in the city a couple of weeks ago, and heard the local authorities admit that they are having difficulty in implementing their plans, and need the help of citizens to make things improve. Some Bengalureans will surely be willing to help, but their participation should be sought when the plans are being made, and not as an afterthought when the *sarkar* finds that its plans aren't working.

In recent weeks, we've repeatedly seen photographs and videos of senior officials and ministers standing on the roads inspecting something or the other, and promising action. This is a kind of assurance that the government is on the job, finally, but it is also not reassuring. Most of what is being directed is patchwork and a series of ad hoc responses to whatever problem seems most pressing each day. That's not going to fix anything.

The solution is right in front of us. Within a kilometre of each of the spots that are being inspected, hundreds of families endure needless suffering. From their lived experiences, they have ideas for how to solve the problems they face. If they are invited to help solve those problems, two things will happen – some of the solutions will benefit from their local knowledge, and citizens will have greater trust in whatever is being tried.

It is both democratic and sensible that people should be able to participate more and more in how the city is run. One day, we're going to have to make this choice correctly. Until we do that, the deficits will persist.

EMPIRE OF THE MIND

Politics of outrage: Where dialogue dies in moral binaries

Gurucharan Gollerkeri

The former civil servant enjoys traversing the myriad spaces of ideas, thinkers, and books

In ideological or political propaganda, it was historically the case that each side argues its position as correct and the other as wrong. While each fights to demonstrate it is right and exerts persuasive rhetoric to expand its sphere of influence, it was also the case that there was a subtle recognition that the other side may also have a point – a tacit acknowledgement that the arguments against us may have some merit. Yet, it followed that 'engaged as I am in a polemic, I will fight for country and people'. In recent times, politics across the world has transformed adversaries into demons.

For centuries, ideological disputes were fought vigorously but with a measure of respect for the adversary. Each side sought to prove itself right, marshalling persuasion and rhetoric, yet beneath the clash was an implicit acknowledgement: the other side, like our own, is engaged in what it sees as a fair fight, for a cause it believes in. Just that it was a difference of views. A socialist could concede that markets have virtues; a conservative might admit that reforms were necessary. That recognition created space for rapprochement, bipartisanship, and compromise. Politics could be adversarial without being annihilatory. This was recognition that democracy thrives not when one camp annihilates the other, but when adversaries leave a window open to cooperation.

This equilibrium held until the mid-20th century. The Second World War introduced a new moral framing: Hitler became the embodiment of evil, Nazism the ideology of pure darkness, and the Allies the forces of light. Of course, the Nazi regime committed monstrous crimes. But what was different was the way the conflict was narrated afterwards – as an absolute moral contest between Good and Evil. Other equally destructive leaders – Augusto Pinochet in Latin America, Idi Amin in Africa, Pol Pot in Asia, and Nicolae Ceau escu in Europe – committed horrendous crimes but were not demonised in the same way. The binary of Good Vs. Evil soon became the template for global politics.

The Cold War was framed as a moral struggle between 'open societies' and their 'enemies'. Later, Saddam Hussein was cast as part of an 'axis of evil,' while America claimed to embody righteousness. Bashar al-Assad was demonised, while radical Islamist groups opposing him were sometimes represented as the 'good'. Today, Russia and China are painted in broad strokes as malign shadows, while America and Europe project themselves as custodians of virtue. When every adversary is labelled a Nazi and evil, the word itself loses meaning – and dialogue becomes impossible.

This binary has now metastasised into domestic politics in several societies, resulting in sharp polarisation. The oldest democracy, the United States, is trapped in a duel between two absolutist camps. The Woke movement sees itself as a crusade for justice, dismissing its critics as reactionaries. The MAGA movement sees itself as defending the 'real America,' dismissing opponents as traitors. Each side paints the other not merely as mistaken but as malevolent. The result is paralysis, tribal hatred, and civic decay. And America is not alone. Across the world, societies are splitting into rival camps where every debate is cast as an existential fight between light and darkness. The tragedy is that while we squander our energies demonising each other, the true challenges of our age go unaddressed. Climate change, pandemics, artificial intelligence, inequality, migration, food insecurity: these do not respect ideological borders. They demand pragmatism, cooperation, and the humility to admit that no single ideology has all the answers. Yet, if we remain trapped in the binary, we will be too busy fighting shadows to confront the fires raging around us. Our real enemies are not each other, but the crises that threaten our shared future.

History offers us reminders of what is possible when adversaries step out of the binary trap. Post-war Europe was rebuilt not only by victors punishing losers but also by reconciliation. India's early years of independence saw ideological rivals sparring fiercely yet often finding common ground in nation-building. Even during the Cold War, moments of détente were carved out to reduce the risk of annihilation. To reclaim that spirit requires courage, not outrage to shout louder, but the courage to listen. The mark of a mature polity is not unanimity, but the ability to accommodate difference without splintering into warring camps. The challenge is to reclaim civic dignity in public discourse. Leaders, across all walks of life, must resist the temptation of moral absolutism and remind themselves, constantly, that those who oppose our ideas are not enemies, but fellow citizens with a different viewpoint. Politics must become a space of shared problem-solving, not existential conflict.

History's greatest tragedies were not born of disagreement, but by 'Us' refusing to see the humanity in 'Them'.

The unquiet crisis within

Inflammation isn't just a wellness buzzword; increasingly, science views it as the silent trigger behind some of today's most serious diseases. Understanding its causes and mechanisms isn't just trendy; it's vital for safeguarding your future health, discovers Fiona Vaz

Saina (*name changed*), 55, endured severe acid reflux for nearly a decade and left it untreated. The constant burning in her chest eventually inflamed her oesophagus and damaged its cells. Years later, she was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer. What began as a simple "it's only acidity" evolved into a dangerous disease — a reminder of how a small spark can quietly turn into flames.

This development traces back to inflammation — the body's defense mechanism. A swollen cut, fever, or stiff joint is a sign of it. For instance, when you cut your finger, it bleeds, swells, reddens, and throbs. In its acute form, inflammation helps heal, protect from infection, and repair tissue. But when this same process becomes chronic and refuses to switch off, it begins to harm rather than heal, silently fuelling Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, autoimmune conditions, cancers, mental health issues, and neurodegenerative decline.

"Inflammation is the body's natural defense," explains Dr Junaid Maqbool, cancer researcher. "In the short term, it's helpful. The problem begins when it disbalances — that's when it starts damaging healthy tissues and becomes the hidden link driving multiple diseases."

The new Instagram favourite

Inflammation has become the new focus of both medical research and media discussion. Once considered a symptom, it's now seen as a root cause behind modern health problems.

"Sometimes the body's defense mechanism turns into a terrorist organisation, destroying the same tissue it's meant to protect," says Dr Anand Rao, rheumatologist.

Across social media, "inflammation" has become a trending topic. Meanwhile, publications such as *The Lancet* and *The New York Times* underline it as a common root behind NCDs. In simple terms, acute inflammation is protective and easy to identify; chronic inflammation is harmful, often making the immune system attack healthy tissues without visible symptoms.

The Indian scenario

India's population has both a genetic predisposition and lifestyle triggers for chronic inflammation. "South Asians are genetically conditioned with internal inflammation and belly fat," says Dr Vinayak Hiremath, metabolic and endocrine specialist. "Urban India is inflamed from the inside out."

India's food landscape has also transformed rapidly. Traditional home-cooked meals have been replaced by processed foods, restaurant snacks, and ready-to-eat meals — convenience at a cost. "For some, it begins with a viral infection; for others, it's poor diet or obesity," notes Dr Rao.

Murugan Marudappan, health and wellness coach, explains how India's traditional diet — rich in millets, dals, seasonal fruits, and vegetables — has natural anti-inflammatory benefits. "Millets are both anti-inflammatory and affordable. People are rediscovering them only after celebrity endorsements," he adds.

Dr Hiremath warns that India's youth are at risk. "India is demographically young but biologically inflamed. Diabetes and heart disease appear a decade earlier here than in the West."

Overshadowed by the Big C

Globally, the concern is urgent. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), NCDs cause 74% of deaths worldwide. The leading culprits are cancers, chronic respiratory conditions, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

"In the scientific community, inflammation is now recognised as one of the most fundamental processes influencing disease," says Bhargavi Somasundaram, researcher in clinical immunology. "Earlier, cancer and cardiovascular studies dominated. But as autoimmune and inflammatory conditions rise, focus is shifting."

She emphasises the need for greater awareness and funding in India. "Inflammation research often gets overshadowed by cancer or diabetes. Yet it's the common factor linking many of these illnesses — it deserves more importance."

Another active research area is the gut. Diets low in fibre and high in processed foods disrupt the gut microbiome, leading to what scientists call a "leaky gut." When harmful particles leak into the bloodstream, they trigger a persistent immune response.

A glut of misinformation

As scientific interest grows, so does misinformation. "I worry that research is being sensationalised," says Bhargavi. "The wellness industry promises that a glass of lemon water will 'cure' inflammation. That's misleading. Diet matters, but it's only one piece of a much larger puzzle.

Dr Maqbool agrees. "The term 'inflammation' is often thrown around as a trendy, one-size-fits-all explanation for health issues. Not every instance of pain or fatigue comes from it. Oversimplifying it hides the complexity of the immune system."

Cancer and autoimmune diseases

Research shows chronic inflammation isn't just a bystander — it can drive tumour growth in cancers like those of the stomach, liver, colon, and cervix.

Inflammatory molecules such as IL-6 and TNF-α promote DNA damage, stimulate uncontrolled cell growth, and suppress immune responses that normally destroy tumour cells. "That's why roughly 30 to 50 per cent of cancers are preventable by reducing inflammatory risk factors like tobacco, alcohol, obesity, diet, and infections," says Dr Maqbool.

For autoimmune patients, the mechanism is similar — the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissue

Swetha (*name changed*), 25, who suffers from Lupus, says, "Stomach inflammation is a recurring issue. Some foods agree on some days and not on others. As I have Secondary APS (antiphospholipid syndrome), even a small wound can become critical."

Risks for children

Chronic inflammation isn't limited to adults. Dr Suman, paediatrician, warns of rising childhood obesity in India — a condition that creates a constant low-grade inflammatory state. "Earlier, undernutrition was our main concern. Now, obesity is leading to early diabetes and hypertension."

She urges parents to take early signs seriously — reduced playfulness, loss of appetite, delayed growth, or lingering fatigue. "If a child stays inactive for more than a week post-illness, seek medical advice immediately. Early detection is crucial."

In rare cases, undiagnosed conditions such as Kawasaki disease can inflame blood vessels, especially in children under five. "It begins with a five-day fever, rashes, red eyes, cracked lips, and swollen hands and feet," she notes.

Dr Hiremath adds, "Even children are developing early insulin resistance. Cytokines from belly fat disrupt insulin, damage the pancreas, and drive diabetes."

The Covid connection

Post-Covid, many patients continue to show elevated inflammatory markers, with lingering symptoms such as fatigue, brain fog, and breathlessness.

Yachana Goyal, psychologist, says, "With the rise in burnout and work overload, inflammation levels have surged. Inflammation triggered by the virus — often called neuroinflammatory storms — is linked to depression, anxiety, memory issues, and long-term neurodegenerative disorders."

Detecting the spark

Systemic inflammation can be measured through blood markers like C-reactive protein (CRP), cytokines, and ESR, though these tests aren't definitive. "They give a snapshot, not the full story," says Dr Maqbool. Dr Rao cautions against unnecessary testing. "There's no point in testing everyone. Without symptoms, results can mislead."

Still, tracking inflammation has clinical value. In cancer, for instance, high CRP levels can help predict outcomes and guide treatment strategies.

Anti-inflammatory remedies

Experts agree that lifestyle changes hold the key. A diet rich in traditional staples — millets, lentils, legumes, seasonal vegetables, and greens — offers natural protection. "Healthy fats like nuts and seeds calm inflammation, while fermented foods and yoghurts nourish gut bacteria," says Murugan. "The shorter the shelf life, the healthier the food."

Other remedies include daily brisk walking for 30 minutes, yoga, meditation, and sufficient sleep. Chronic stress, on the other hand, raises cortisol and inflammatory cytokines.

More than a trend

Inflammation may be trending, but it's far from a fad. It's central to both medical science and overall well-being. While urban India flocks to wellness trends like Pilates, keto, and intermittent fasting, rural communities still struggle with access to basic care. Yet, the growing awareness signals progress.

"I see this as a lasting shift," says Bhargavi. "People are learning that inflammation underlies many NCDs. If communicated well, this understanding can reshape prevention and healthcare."

For children, Dr Suman insists, "Regular wellness checks and good nutrition are non-negotiable." And Murugan leaves a reminder: "Plan your meals, stock real food. Health isn't about convenience — it's about consistent habits."

For researchers like Dr Maqbool, the takeaway is clear: "Preventing inflammation-driven diseases is a massive health opportunity. Act early, and we can extinguish the fire before it spreads."

Are anti-inflammatory drinks any good?

The viral moment came when Vidya Balan posted on her Instagram reel how she starts her day with a warm, soothing anti-inflammatory drink. Suddenly, everyone wanted to sip like a Bollywood star, and the recipe circulated like wildfire. The concoction? Warm water + ½ tsp turmeric powder, a slice or pinch of crushed ginger, a "dash" of black pepper, juice of ½ lemon, and 1 tsp honey if you like it sweet.

Are anti-inflammatory drinks actually any good? Yes, but with a caveat. Ingredients like turmeric (due to its active curcumin) and ginger have shown measurable anti-inflammatory effects. Ginger and turmeric appear to have synergistic benefits, meaning they work better when consumed together.

That said, there are no miracle cures. Most studies involve high doses or extracts, not just a teaspoon in water, and absorption (bioavailability) is an issue. If your diet is full of sugar and processed foods, but you wake up and chug an anti-inflammatory drink, nothing much will change.

The drink is useful as a habit to support lower inflammation, especially if you make it a ritual alongside healthy eating and movement, but it's not magic. Try it like a nourishing daily positive note for your body, not a sticky miracle.

KNOW YOUR KEYWORDS

IL-6 (Interleukin-6): A pleiotropic cytokine that acts as a pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory agent.

Secondary APS: It is an autoimmune condition that causes blood clots and is often linked with other diseases, such as Lupus.

C-reactive protein (CRP): It is a blood test done to measure the amount of CRP in the body, produced by the liver as a response to inflammation.

Cytokines: Small proteins helping immune cells regulate inflammation, communication, immunity, and growth.

Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR): A blood test measuring the rate at how fast red blood cells settle, a way to detect inflammation in the body.

MIXED BAG

'Mixed Bag' is your Sunday potpourri — an assortment of snappy articles, engaging ideas and snackable nibbles about this and that, from here and there. Dip in!

Long-lost artefact turns up in a backyard

A New Orleans family cleaning up their overgrown backyard made an extremely unusual find: under the weeds was a mysterious marble tablet with Latin characters that included the phrase "spirits of the dead."

"The fact that it was in Latin that really just gave us pause, right?" said Daniella Santoro, a Tulane University anthropologist. "I mean, you see something like that and you say, okay, this is not an ordinary thing.'" Intrigued and slightly alarmed, Santoro reached out to her classical archaeologist colleague Susann Lusnia, who quickly realised that the slab was the 1,900-year-old grave marker of a Roman sailor named Sextus Congenius Verus.

The tablet had been missing from an Italian museum for decades. PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

"When I first saw the image that Daniella sent me, it really did send a shiver up my spine because I was just floored," Lusnia said. Further sleuthing by Lusnia revealed the tablet had been missing from an Italian museum for decades.

Sextus Congenius Verus had died at age 42, of unknown causes, after serving for more than two decades in the imperial navy on a ship named for the Roman god of medicine, Asclepius.

The gravestone calls the sailor "well deserving" and was commissioned by two people described as his "heirs," who were likely shipmates since Roman military personnel could not be married at the time, Lusnia said.

The tablet was found in an ancient cemetery containing around 20 graves of military personnel, discovered in the 1860s in Civitavecchia, a seaside town in northwest Italy, approximately 30 miles (48 kilometres) from Rome. Its text had been recorded in 1910 and included in a catalogue of Latin inscriptions, which noted that the tablet's whereabouts were unknown.

The tablet was later documented at the National Archaeological Museum in Civitavecchia before World War II. But the museum had been "pretty much destroyed" during Allied bombing and took several decades to rebuild, Lusnia said. Museum staff confirmed to Lusnia that the tablet had been missing for decades.

AP

The art and politics of the sari

In the summer of 1929, one of India's foremost female freedom fighters, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, travelled to Berlin with several other delegates to attend a conference of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship. India was under British rule, and the Indian representatives didn't have a flag.

Kamaladevi saw this as deeply unjust. So she and her delegates cut up their saris to create their own flag to fly at the conference's opening gala. In an instant, those women turned the sari into a political statement.

Among the oldest-known garments, but one that remains fashionable enough to be spotted on red carpets and runways, the 6- to 9-yard draped fabric that constitutes a sari has long been more than just clothing: It has been a symbol of empowerment, of global trade, of diplomatic soft power and of resistance. That is the idea at the centre of an exhibition at the New York Historical Society, called New York Sari, which will run till next April. The exhibition aims to shine a light on how the garment is woven into the complex histories of the Indian subcontinent and, in unexpected ways, New York City and the United States, and how it "might tell stories about migration and diaspora and struggle," Salonee Bhaman, a historian, said.

A sculpture made entirely of handspun kala cotton at the exhibition. (NYT PIC)

NYT

FEEDBACK
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ASTROSPEAK

Guruji Shrii Arnav

Scan the QR code to read the ***weekly horoscope***

This is a doorstopper, alright, but it eruditely explores how India's markets tell a vivid story of ambition, belief, and the cultural chase for wealth, writes Anubhav Srivastava

Sharpening the WEALTH INSTINCT

Markets, for all their noise, reflect man's desire to advance by powering through cycles of excess and correction, believes the author.

Few books capture India's long and complicated relationship with money as steadily as Adil Rustomjee's Running Behind Lakshmi. Deliberately paced and just under 800 pages, it is a carefully documented history of how the country's financial markets grew into mirrors of its society — layered, adaptive and endlessly inventive in the chase for the goddess of prosperity.

Most accounts of money in India are preoccupied with the dramatic — the bull run, the scam, the recovery. Rustomjee's account, in contrast, is closer to a period drama. It begins in the early 19th century, when informal trades under banyan trees in Bombay's Fort area served as a proto-exchange, and unfolds through colonial regulation, the licence-permit raj, liberalisation, and the digital age.

RUNNING BEHIND LAKSHMI
Adil Rustomjee
Hachette,
pp 880,
Rs 1,599

Drawing on archival material, company records, government correspondence, and the recollections of early brokers, Rustomjee examines how stock exchanges and their participants shaped systems and processes. Community, that ever-present glue, was central to trading, settlement and the first efforts at regulation. These interactions built the foundation for a formal exchange in a country traditionally inclined towards tangible assets like land and bullion.

The early exchanges, propelled by 19th-century opportunity and 20th-century upheaval, appeared to lie idle for decades before exploding into the world's largest derivatives exchange. The early chapters can feel heavy, but the deliberate tempo helps the reader grasp the later significance of minor events. By the 1980s and 1990s, each reform and crisis emerged as part of a longer continuity. The shift from manual transactions to electronic terminals, and from paper certificates to demat accounts, becomes a story not only of technology but of changing trust — from people to paper to machines.

Adil Rustomjee

At its core, the book explores the spiritually sanctioned pursuit of opportunity in India, where wealth has always carried sacred as well as economic meaning. Rustomjee shows how participants often frame this pursuit of Lakshmi not as greed but as belief: faith in one's ability, timing, and knowledge — often mistaking chance for skill. The market, in his view, has been both a financial mechanism and a collective act of misplaced optimism.

Equally engaging is his treatment of how institutions and credibility took shape. From informal brokers' clubs to the creation of SEBI and the NSE, confidence was gradually formalised. In an age of conformity, Rustomjee's candour about the roles of regulators, the RBI, bureaucrats, and their influence on development stands out. His portrayal of the behaviour of diverse players — brokers, advisors, bankers, FIIs, "fundies," "Hedgies," and the "Aam aadmi" investor — adds texture to this pursuit of prosperity. The work deftly connects regulation, psychology, and policy, illustrating that markets are as much about temperament as they are about trading, distorted in no small measure by government ownership through mega PSUs and LIC's market presence.

Among his sharper observations is the rise of the unprofessional intermediary — the business, advisor, or manager who, while navigating India's labyrinthine regulation, has helped create a one-way, SIP-driven investing culture, often without any understanding or management of risk. It is an uncomfortable but accurate reflection of today's landscape, peppered with business channels, broadsheets and 24/7 market coverage feeding the mania. More information has somehow led to less coherence.

The timing of the book is apt. With a record number of demat accounts and a mobile phone-fuelled trading boom signalling a retail wave, Rustomjee reminds readers that this enthusiasm has deep roots. The investment clubs of the 1950s and the IPO surges of the 2000s expressed the same instinct: to seek wealth and inclusion through finance.

If the book has a limitation, it is its editorial sprawl, which at times tests readability but never weakens the argument. A leaner version might have been easier to navigate, but would have lost the archival quality that distinguishes it. For both participants and researchers, it is less a one-time read and more a second-order reference, a guide to understanding Indian financial market regulation, behaviour, and rhythm over time.

Running Behind Lakshmi does not offer portfolio guidance or formulas for navigating complexity. What it offers instead is perspective: an appreciation of how the market's behaviour is shaped by history, culture, and the habits of its partakers. It explains why Indian investors, despite periodic shocks, continue to see speculation as a legitimate path to progress — and how, after giving FIIs a free run, they still manage to turn a profit. Observations like these are invaluable for anyone attempting to understand or participate in the markets. The conclusion Rustomjee arrives at is quietly compelling. Having traced two centuries of speculation and reform, he sees India's markets as both an instrument and a reflection of human progress. The democratisation of investing, enabled by SEBI's framework and the digitisation of finance, has broadened participation in ways earlier generations could not have imagined. What began as the domain of wealthy families in the metros is now accessible to millions of small investors through SIPs and low-cost entry points.

He argues that this widening base is not accidental. It stems from the same instinct that propels all progress: the need to advance and translate aspiration into enterprise.

That, perhaps, is Rustomjee's message — that markets, for all their noise, reflect man's desire to advance. Through every cycle of excess and correction, they embody the compounding nature of progress. Running Behind Lakshmi is not only a chronicle of India's financial evolution but also a meditation on why societies continue to chase prosperity.

The reviewer is the Managing Partner at a SEBI-registered investment advisory firm. He writes on markets, investor behaviour and the intersection of finance and policy.

When blind devotion becomes a trap...

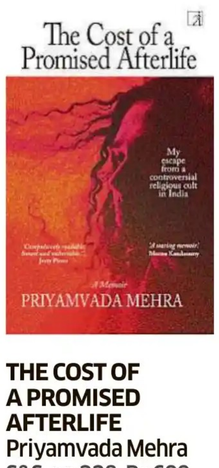
This is a memoir charged with tension, empathy, and deep compassion, exposing the sinister modern phenomenon of the spiritual business, writes Sudhirendar Sharma

The Cost of a Promised Afterlife is a haunting narrative about the staggering emotional price the vulnerable pay for blind faith in a godman. It chronicles how unquestioned loyalty is extracted in the name of devotion, how questioning becomes forbidden, miracles are promised, and salvation is projected. This deeply compelling memoir reveals layers of suppressed defiance woven into remarkable devotion and quiet suffering.

Despite the shadow of financial hardship, a small family with two children tried to create moments of joy. Born to disabled parents, the children found happiness in the little things — simple joys of early childhood and the comfort of shared laughter. But beneath that fragile calm ran a current of misplaced trust, one that would slowly erode the family's world.

This moving memoir is an unflinching account of how blind faith almost always triumphs over science. It narrates how, in the absence of credible resources and structural support, a family is pulled into the makeshift universe of a self-proclaimed godman. From an impressionable childhood to a troubled adulthood, Priyamvada Mehra bears witness to the heavy cosmic price her family paid for defying Rampal — the self-styled guru who demanded total surrender.

It became a daily struggle to define oneself, to find a purpose that felt real. Over time, the endless chanting of mantras and the repetition of rituals dulled into monotony, draining both energy and hope. Seventeen years under the godman's shadow shrank their world. Life turned into a long deception — marked by fear, illness, and the absence of accountability. No one was answerable, and that absence of justice became the hardest truth to accept.



THE COST OF A PROMISED AFTERLIFE
Priyamvada Mehra
S&S, pp 328, Rs 699

The Cost of a Promised Afterlife is, at its heart, a consequence of misplaced trust in a man who prized obedience over well-being. As the book rightly observes, "In a country where cults preside over the cultural, social, and political lives of millions, the writer makes a brave beginning in studying this new religious movement."

Told through the eyes of the youngest member of the family, this account is both tender and terrifying. It is impossible to turn away from such an intimate portrait of vulnerability — a family trapped in the whirlpool of organised religiosity, desperately seeking meaning amid manipulation. The story is charged with tension, empathy, and deep compassion, exposing the sinister modern phenomenon of the spiritual business.

When the family faced the death of its matriarch, they were too fragile and too paralysed to trust science. The medically dormant tumour was instead declared a "divine sign," a sacred proof of spiritual redemption. Rampal's chilling promise echoed: "All your sorrows will be eliminated hereafter." The house became a sanctum of fear dressed as faith.

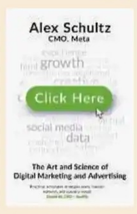
Cults rarely demand instant perfection — they demand unwavering commitment. Rampal was no different. What began as gentle guidance soon hardened into blind loyalty.

The clichés of devotion took over daily life. The lines between faith and duty blurred until nothing was normal. Cracks began to appear in their beliefs, in their bonds, in their once-lovely family. At just 13, the writer was used as a human shield during a violent clash between Rampal's followers and a rival sect. Life's beauty was stolen too soon. With Rampal now serving a life sentence, the family struggles to rebuild, to rediscover a sense of normalcy that feels foreign. For the writer, the pain lingers quietly. She sits by the window for hours, the trees outside her only confidants — silent witnesses to years of suffering. Despite years of sacrifice — falling at the guru's feet, isolating themselves, obeying his diktats — there was nothing good left to salvage.

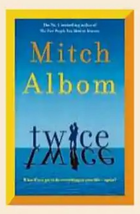
Through this raw, personal account, Mehra raises an urgent question that echoes far beyond her own life: why, even in an era of reason and information, do human societies continue to fall prey to such deceit? The roots of this malaise lie deep. When the natural world was once unknown, myth replaced understanding. Saints and godmen became symbols of moral and metaphysical authority. Blind faith, born of ignorance, ossified into social tradition, and then migrated seamlessly into culture and politics.

Should we continue to live with it, to normalise this cycle of exploitation as part of our cultural fabric? The Cost of a Promised Afterlife is a brave, unguarded, and essential story; a call for awareness and accountability. It confronts the impunity of self-proclaimed godmen and the systems that enable them. It is hard to look away from this testimony of pain, faith, and awakening.

BOOKRACK



CLICK HERE
Alex Schultz
Hachette, pp 400, Rs 699
The author guides readers through the key principles for maximising the impact of your marketing budget, whether you are working for a global corporation or running your own start-up.

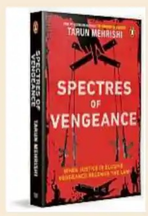


TWICE
Mitch Albom
Hachette, pp 320, Rs 699
This is a love story that is enchanting, probing, and clairvoyant in matters of the heart. It promises to make you think, weep, and overflow with love from beginning to end.

THE LIAR AMONG US
Bishhal Paull
Bloomsbury, pp 300, Rs 499

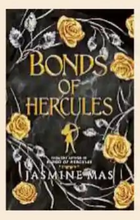
At Valorhouse International, an elite boarding school shrouded in the mist-drenched hills of Sikkim, secrets don't stay buried. Strange whispers echo in empty halls. Students start vanishing; first in secret, then in plain sight.

SPECTRES OF VENGEANCE
Tarun Mehrishi



Penguin, pp 328, Rs 399
In a world where shadows conceal the truth and power is the ultimate prize, Amitabh Mehta, India's resolute chief of intelligence, stands firm against corruption and terror. But his biggest test is on the horizon.

BONDS OF HERCULES
Jasmine Mas
Harper, pp 528, Rs 599



Every hero has their monsters. And Alexis is bound to hers: tied eternally, irrevocably to the Underworld's dark heirs in a marriage that has shaken the foundations of Olympus.

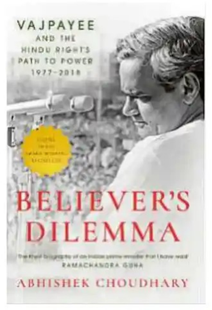
Poet's pitch in a chorus

In this biography, Vajpayee emerges not as a tragic liberal trapped in a party of firebrands, but as a skilled and adaptive political actor, says Ananya Singh

Former prime minister AB Vajpayee seen with the then Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and BJP leader L K Advani in December 2003. (PTI FILE PHOTO)

In April 2002, after the aftermath of the Gujarat riots, which left over 2,000 people dead, a disproportionate number of them Muslims, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited the embattled state. At a press conference held during this visit, with the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, seated beside him, Vajpayee was asked what advice he might offer Modi. The prime minister responded with "He should follow Raj Dharma," the ancient Indian concept denoting the righteous duty of a ruler. This remark has since become a touchstone in assessments of the contrast between Vajpayee and Modi.

Where many commentators retrospectively cast Vajpayee as a moderating, occasionally reluctant figure within the Hindutva project, Modi has been portrayed as the embodiment of its unapologetic consolidation. While accounts suggest he was disturbed by Modi's administrative handling of the riots, he ultimately demurred. A man often described as the 'moderate face' of an otherwise majoritarian formation chose accommodation over confrontation, a choice that would define the years of his political career. It is within this web of contradictions between reformist temperaments, structural conservatism, and ideological complicity that Choudhary situates the second volume of his penetrating biography of Vajpayee.



BELIEVER'S DILEMMA
Abhishek Choudhary
Picador, pp 496, Rs 999

Vajpayee offered the Sangh or the Hindu Nationalists a face it needed. As Choudhary observes, Vajpayee became the crucial intermediary, a man who opened the doors of democratic liberty wide enough for an ideological family that, once inside, began methodically to dismantle its foundations.The author carefully reconstructs the power dynamics between Vajpayee and Morarji Desai, revealing deep cleavages over foreign policy vision and national self-conception. The sections on Vajpayee's tenure as PM are among the most analytically rich.

As foreign minister, Vajpayee flirted with the notion of a South Asian supranational consortium not unlike a nascent European Union. This was not mirrored in the domestic sphere, where the Janata coalition's centrifugal tendencies meant it never quite delivered the Sampoorn Kranti (Total Revolution) that Jayaprakash Narayan had envisioned.

The late 1970s were a moment of global tumult. Vajpayee sought to recalibrate India's posture. He advocated for a tempered, even conciliatory, approach toward China. This tightrope became even more perilous following China's invasion of Vietnam in early 1979. His statement did little to silence critics on either side.

Meanwhile, at home, the Janata coalition, derided by Indira Gandhi as a khichdi sarkar (a mishmash government), was imploding. Ideological incoherence, personal animosities, and mutual suspicion had reduced the promise of post-Emergency renewal to a tragic farce, Choudhary notes. Vajpayee's occasional adoption of "Gandhian socialism" began to grate against his formative intellectual inheritance from Upadhyaya's "Integral Humanism." It was not a wholesale rejection, but a rhetorical deviation. His rhetorical flourishes and pragmatism notwithstanding, he repeatedly came to the RSS's defence during moments of public scrutiny, offering both political cover and ideological affirmation. By the early 1990s, the BJP had transitioned from a peripheral force to the principal opposition party, and it did so on the back of precisely the kind of mobilisation that Vajpayee had once seemed wary of. When the Babri Masjid was demolished in December 1992, Vajpayee, characteristically, responded with ambivalence cloaked in oratory. Vajpayee's insistence on court verdicts, his mild distancing from the kar seva optics, and his appeals for constitutionalism are contrasted with his incendiary speeches in the movement's later phases. The "accidental liberal" proved, in the end, to be a loyal institutional actor. The poet had found his pitch within the chorus. Among the most absorbing sections are the chapters dealing with economic policymaking and foreign affairs.

Choudhary charts in great detail how the Vajpayee government, having attained nuclear status, quickly moved to stabilise relations not only with Pakistan, via the Lahore bus initiative, but also with the United States and other powers.

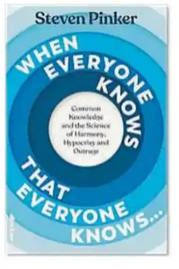
What emerges is not a tragic liberal trapped in a party of firebrands, but a skilled and highly adaptive political actor whose career illustrates the tactical and ideological flexibility of the Hindu nationalist movement. It is at once meticulously researched, lucidly narrated, and intellectually rigorous.

READ OF THE WEEK

As a cognitive scientist, the ultimate subject of Steven Pinker's fascination is how we think about each other's thoughts, ad infinitum. It sounds impossible, but Steven Pinker shows that we do it all the time.

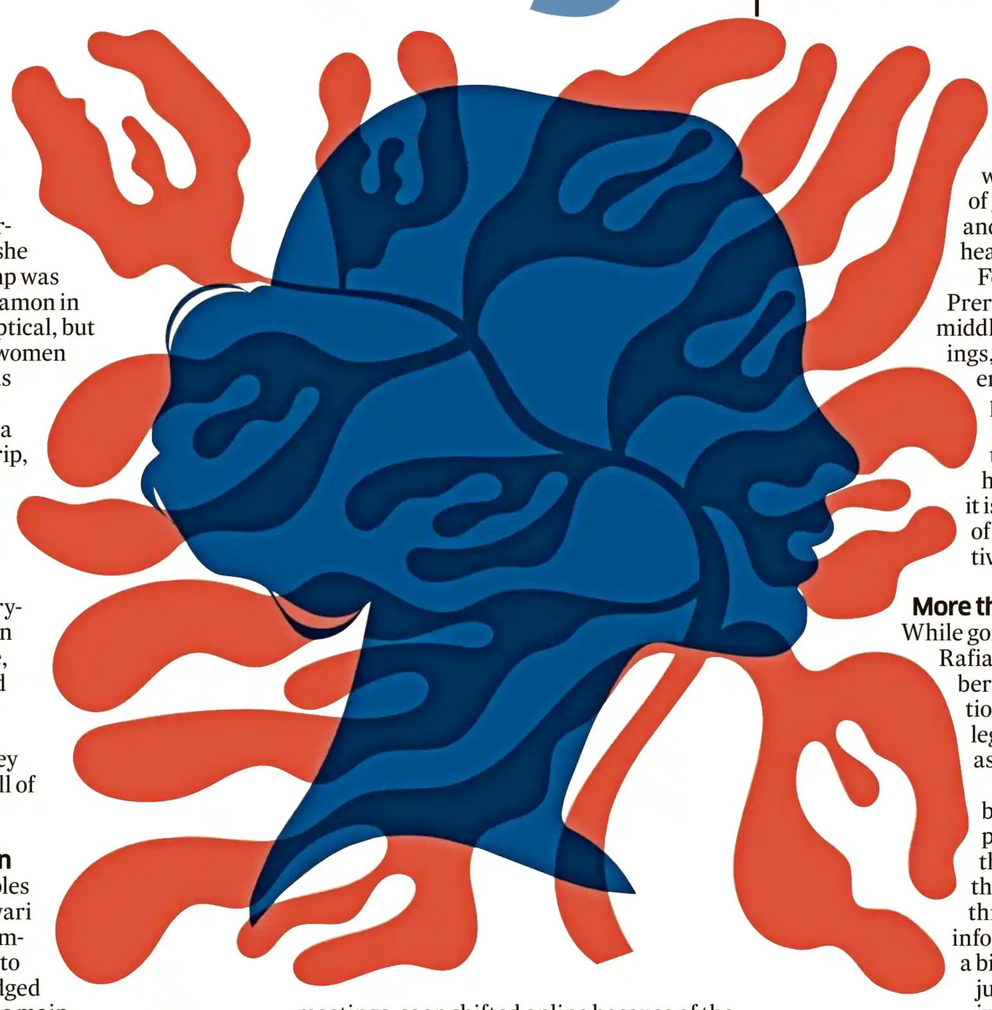
Common knowledge, Pinker shows, can make sense of many of life's enigmas: financial bubbles and crashes, revolutions that come out of nowhere, the posturing and pretence of diplomacy, the eruption of social media shaming mobs and academic cancel culture, and the awkwardness of a first date. But people also go to great lengths to avoid common knowledge — to ensure that even if everyone knows something, they can't know that everyone else knows they know it. And so we get rituals like benign hypocrisy, veiled bribes and threats, sexual innuendo, and pretending not to see the elephant in the room. In exploring the paradoxes of human behaviour, When Everyone Knows that Everyone Knows invites us to understand the ways we try to get into each other's heads, and the harmonies, hypocrisies, and outrages that result.

Steven Pinker is one of the world's leading authorities on language and the mind. The recipient of several major awards, Pinker is a Johnstone Family Professor of Psychology at Harvard University and regularly writes for several international publications.


Steven Pinker
WHEN EVERYONE KNOWS
Common Knowledge and the Science of Harmony, Hypocrisy and Outrage
THAT EVERYONE KNOWS...

By way of camping trips and WhatsApp communities, women are stepping up to support others going through divorce and separation, writes Aisiri Amin

Joining hands, holding space



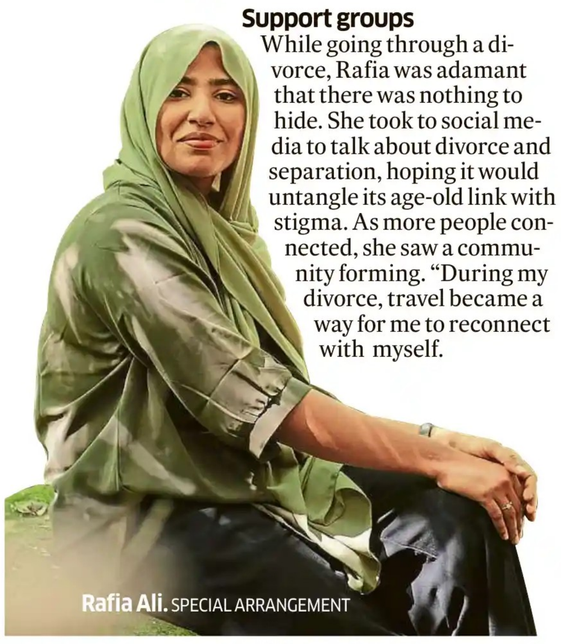
When Raseena T S first thought of separating from her husband, the thought came with a flood of anxiety that left her overwhelmed. It was the only life she had known since she was 18. She had spent her 20s in a marriage where respect wasn't on the table, and the weight of gendered expectations had silenced her freedom and aspirations. Now, as a 30-year-old, Raseena has walked away and is slowly building a life on her own terms.

Although her parents and brother were supportive, shame — that continues to follow women through separation and divorce — would often leave Raseena feeling isolated. Recently, she came across Kozhikode-based Break Free Stories, a community for women going through divorce or separation. "I was initially sceptical but talking to women in a similar phase who can understand what you might be going through makes you feel less alone," she says.

It was precisely with this idea that 31-year-old content creator Rafia Ali conceptualised Break Free Stories (@breakfree_stories). Started in May this year, the initiative aims to create safe, judgement-free spaces for divorced or separated women through travel. "When I was going through a divorce, I remember looking for people who had a similar experience. We still live in a society where divorce is seen as taboo, especially for women. And support during this incredibly exhausting phase remains inaccessible for many," she says. In just about two months, 100 women have reached out to Rafia.

Like Rafia, Mumbai-based 33-year-old author of *Divorce is Normal*, Shasvathi Siva's idea of starting a support group for divorced people in 2019 is also rooted in her own experience. "When I got divorced in 2018, I had people to lean on but still felt the need to talk to someone who had a similar experience. I found people online, and talking to them felt comforting. When they say things are going to get better, you tend to believe it," she says.

Support groups



Rafia Ali. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

While going through a divorce, Rafia was adamant that there was nothing to hide. She took to social media to talk about divorce and separation, hoping it would untangle its age-old link with stigma. As more people connected, she saw a community forming. "During my divorce, travel became a way for me to reconnect with myself. So, I decided to start camping trips for women going through the same, in the hope that a change of place and togetherness would help," she says. The first camp was in late May, to Vagamon in Kerala. "I was sceptical, but meeting so many women who were generous with support felt amazing," Raseena says. During the trip, the women played games, engaged in fun activities, and shared their experiences. "We held space for everyone's story. Women spoke about abuse, mistreatment, and incompatibility in marriage, and the many thoughts they had while facing all of it," Rafia says.

An added burden

Jaipur-based couples therapist Yogeshwari points out that women are more likely to be shamed and judged for divorce because maintaining a marriage is seen as a woman's responsibility. "Women tend to face more social exclusion because of it. They also feel a lack of safety, so they often don't know who to talk to about it," she says.

For Shasvathi, the whispers and silence around divorce felt frustrating. She refused to treat it like a secret — something to be ashamed of. Instead, she has been working towards normalising it through conversations, a support group, and even a book.

The support group started as in-person meetings, soon shifted online because of the Covid-19 lockdown After running a mixed-group community for about four years on Telegram, recently, Shasvathi made a shift to a women-only WhatsApp community. "It was after a lot of complaints about women getting creepy messages from some men," she says. "When women-only communities are started, the question is often: why not for all? I started the community for everyone, but it ended up not being a safe space for many women." Shasvathi also points out that divorce is significantly more difficult for women because men benefit from marriage, and women don't. "For women, divorce comes with breaking the cycle of generational trauma and taking on patriarchy head-on," she adds.

For Bengaluru-based Prerna*, 41, who is in the middle of divorce proceedings, the shift to a women-only group made it possible for her to engage in the group more than before. "You don't have to think twice, and it is helping me see more of women's perspectives," she says.

More than support

While going through divorce, Rafia and Shasvathi remember having endless questions about the process, legal steps, and financial aspects of it.

Now, they feel that bringing together people who have gone through divorce with those who are going through it bridges that information gap a bit. "There is just so much judgement around it that you don't feel safe enough to ask questions or know who to turn to for help. As a mother, I also wanted to know how I can help my child through this. So, when you connect with women with experience, it helps," Prerna says.

Living in a society that leaves no opportunity to tell women they are being difficult often makes them second-guess mistreatment and even abuse. For Prerna, having her trust constantly broken in 16 years of marriage left her questioning everything. "I didn't know how to talk about it. But listening to other women's stories gives you the validation that you are not overreacting and what happened was wrong," she says.

An exclusive WhatsApp community is helping women stay connected.

Musician and lawyer Sanjeevini Jayanthi, 29, had initially joined Break Free Stories to support her friend Rafia with the ice-breaker activities. But along the way, she experienced a realisation of her own. Having watched her mother endure years of abuse in her marriage and pass away because of it, Sanjeevini couldn't help but wonder: would things have turned out differently if her mother had access to a community like this?

Legal help

Now, she joins the group as a legal advisor, answering the many questions women have about divorce and separation. "I became a lawyer so that my mother's story doesn't repeat. Women thinking of divorce have so many questions but often no one to answer them," she says. "Many times, that becomes a reason for them to stay rather than leave." Yogeshwari points out that a lot of her clients put off divorce because of a lack of resources. "In the society we live in, legal knowledge is more accessible to men than women," she says. "It's because the divorce itself is more favourably linked to men. A support group where resources are shared can make things a bit easier," she adds. For many like Raseena and Prerna, these support groups have become a way of finding strength in sisterhood.

While recognising the need for more such support groups, Yogeshwari adds, "There should be more collaboration between psychologists, support groups, and lawyers to make divorce easier."

*(*Name changed on request.)*

Travel has emerged as a way to create safe spaces for women. (BREAK FREE STORIES/ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT)

Travel

Kavita Kanan Chandra visits Amsterdam, to find the city pulling out all the stops as it rings in its 750th anniversary tomorrow

By the AMSTEL...

The historic city centre.

Vintage architecture, picturesque canals, slender canal houses, world-class museums, lively streets, trendy boutiques, and cosy cafes make Amsterdam one of the most frequented cities in the world. The old-world charm of Amsterdam enchants, and its liberal attitude captivates visitors.

Amsterdam rings in its 750th birthday on October 27, marking the end of a year-long jubilee celebration. Through the year, the city has worn a festive look, adorned with colourful '750' marked on flags and banners everywhere. 'Amsterdam Forever' is the theme that resonates with residents and visitors, highlighting the city's glorious past and promising a better future.

On the banks of the Amstel

In 1275, a small settlement, 'Amstelledamme', originated at the mouth of the river, Amstel, near the village of Ouderkerk aan de Amstel in the Netherlands. The name, which referred to the dam on the river, kept the land dry. When Count Floris V of Holland granted the inhabitants the right to transport goods free of tolls, 'Amstelledamme' (Amsterdam) was officially recognised for the first time on October 27.

Modern art at Stedelijk Museum. PHOTO BY AUTHOR

The fishing village became a significant trading hub. In the 17th century, the Dutch Golden Age brought immense prosperity and global power to Amsterdam. It led to a boom in trade and finance, art and culture, architecture, science and innovation in shipbuilding, and its historical liberal policies attracted merchants and migrants. Most visitors embark at the Amsterdam Centraal Station, the first transit point to explore Amsterdam and are wowed by its majestic Gothic architecture. Built in 1889 and designed by architect Pierre Cuypers, it symbolises the Golden Age's industrial progress. The exterior boasts intricate details and sculptures.

Walk the Damrak street

You can easily walk to the Damrak street from there to see the 17th-century rows of elegant, slender canal houses with quirky features along the canals. To see the row of canal houses, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, you visit the 'Golden Bend' in the Herengracht neighbourhood.

You can see inside the Bartolotti house, a grand canal house in red bricks.

You can take a boat ride in the world-famous canals of Amsterdam, passing under the artistic bridges, adorned with flowers and bicycles leaning on their rails. Watching the streets and architectural beauty is akin to being in an open-air museum. After the boat ride, soak in the lively vibe of Dam Square, milling with tourists. You may see street performers or an event taking place. The 15th-century Royal Palace and the Nieuwe Kerk church are historic attractions, and the National Monument, a white obelisk structure, is dedicated to the soldiers of World War II.

A city of many museums

You can't leave Amsterdam without visiting one of its 50-plus museums, which may hold some surprises. Then there's the quirky Kattenkabinet, museum of cats, the Pianola Museum, where pianos play with little assistance, and the Anne Frank House, which could be a poignant experience. The city's green credentials extend to the vast sustainable green biodiversity hotspot atop the NEMO Science Museum roof.

For art lovers, Amsterdam's three largest museums, Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh and Stedelijk, are a must-visit in Museumplein.

The 'Gothic and Renaissance style' architecture of the 19th-century Rijksmuseum is as amazing as the 8,000 art and artefacts it houses. The Dutch Golden Age masterpieces like Rembrandt's 'The Night Watch', Johannes Vermeer's 'The Milkmaid', and Van Gogh's self-portraits are captivating. Nearby, the Van Gogh Museum stands out with its revamped foyer of asymmetrical elliptical form in glass. Inside his paintings of landscapes and self-portraits, and his life story of struggles and hope, move art lovers.

Next door, the Stedelijk Museum impresses with its contemporary art collection. Though renovated, the original Dutch Neo-Renaissance building with a grand staircase is intact. From Museumplein, you can walk down to Amsterdam's largest park, Vondelpark, a green space for walking, cycling, skating and picnicking.

Anniversary celebrations are on. PIC COURTESY: MUNICIPALITY OF AMSTERDAM

BOOKMARK THIS

How to reach

- Schiphol Airport has direct flights from India.
- Amsterdam Centraal Station is well-connected to cities across Europe.

When to visit

- Spring, summer and autumn seasons.

Getting around

- I Amsterdam City Card offers access to museums and transport, a canal cruise and bicycle rental.
- The GVB (Gemeente Vervoerbedrijf) card gives access to the city's metro, tram, bus, and ferry services.
- The Canal Cruise Ticket offers the most flexible and convenient way to get on a canal cruise along the historical Amsterdam waterways.

Where to stay

- ClinkNoord Hostel is located in a 1920s Art Deco building.
- The chain of Mercure, Novotel, Ibis or NH hotels.
- Conscious Hotel, where the ethos is about being sustainable and eco-friendly, is an option.

And then, there's the nightlife...

Many tourists flock to Amsterdam for its bustling nightlife, pub crawling and partying scene. Leidseplein is a lively square, a hub of culture and nightlife, with the famous Holland Casino. If you visit De Wallen, be cautious of the Red Light area and the coffeeshops, where cannabis is available freely. Remember, the entire area is under video surveillance. Be respectful of the neighbourhood.

Amsterdam also embraces the LGBTQ+ communities, as evidenced by the annual Pride Parade, a grand celebration on its canals. This reflects the importance of liberty and freedom in Dutch society. If you are not seeking nightlife, but some fun and food, walk through Jordaan Street and the Nine Streets (De 9 Straatjes). These have cafes, boutique hotels, art galleries, and speciality shops.

Say cheese

For street food, visit the Foodhallen (an indoor food court) and the Albert Cuyp market. Try Dutch delicacies, such as bitterballen, stroopwafels, and herring. The 750th year marks the comeback of the city's authentic 'Amsterdammer cheese'.

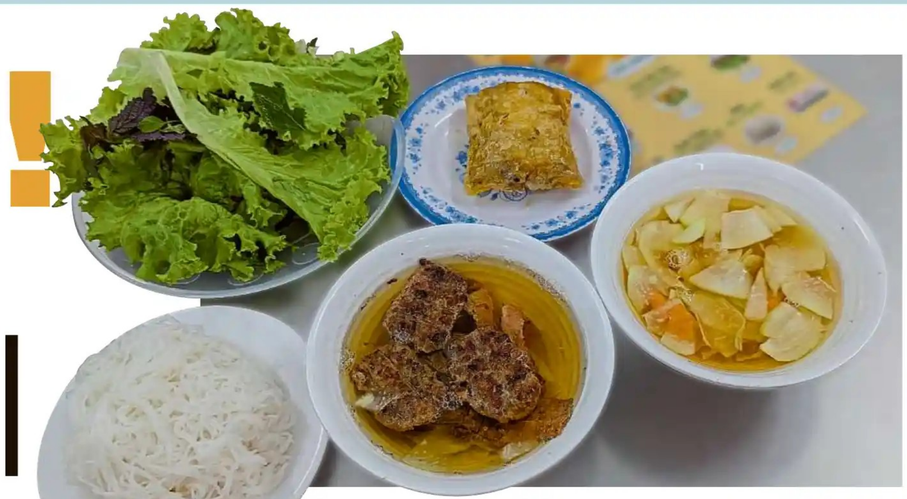
Unique to Amsterdam is its food chain FEBO, where you get hot snacks from vending machines. The brown bars, named after their dark wooden interiors, but cosy atmosphere and the world-famous Heineken brewery are typically Dutch experiences to have drinks.

A fast-emerging neighbourhood to hang out in for modern art, a dining scene, and nightlife is Amsterdam Noord, known for its cutting-edge architecture. The A'dam tower with observation deck, the STRAAT museum of street art and graffiti, the Nxt museum of new media art and the futuristic design of theEye Film Museum attract visitors.

SLURP!

Eat like a local in HANOI

What are the must-eats in the Vietnamese capital and where should you try them? Roxanne Bamboat lists out the best ones, from the popular pho to the lesser known cha ca



Bun cha with a side of fried spring roll.

Pho is an iconic Vietnamese dish. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

Hanoi is a food lover's paradise. It's where cheap eats and fine dining blend to create a food culture so strong that travellers keep coming back for more. In this Vietnamese capital, food is not just for sustenance but for joy – a personal, individual joy in slurping bowls of broth and noodles or diving into a plate of perfectly cooked meats. Vietnamese people take pride in their cuisine, known for delicate flavours and an intricate balance of sweet, spice and tart, and an abundance of fresh herbs.

Widely-known delicacies

Pho – to call this dish a simple noodle soup would be a grave disservice to its brilliance. Pronounced as 'fur', this is an iconic dish and the most popular of all in Vietnam. A deep earthy broth is prepared with beef but often you'll have pork chicken and even vegetarian versions. The broth bowl is served with strips of beef, flat rice noodles and fresh herbs like coriander and shallots. It comes with a table-side condiment of sliced fresh garlic in vinegar and some chilli sauce, in case you'd like a kick of heat. It usually doesn't and it's perfection on its own.
The best place to try pho is the very popular award-winning Pho 10 Ly Quoc Su.

Bun cha – a breakfast dish made so popular thanks to a sit down nearly 10 years ago between the then US president Barack Obama and celebrated chef Anthony Bourdain that it's next to impossible to visit Hanoi and not eat this. Bun cha is a dish of pork cutlets with pieces of pork belly in a sweetish broth made of fish sauce and pork stock. It comes with a side of rice noodles and a basket of fresh herbs with lettuce. Add the noodles and greens to your pork and broth, and slurp in enjoyment.
The place to eat this dish is at Bun Cha Huong Lien, popularly called Obama Bun Cha.

Bahn mi – one of the few good things to come out of the French colonisation is the stunning baguette the Vietnamese make and how they've created an epic sandwich which has become a national treasure. Bahn mi has become a globally recognised sandwich, which many try to recreate, but it's nothing like what you get on the streets of Hanoi. A baguette stuffed with pork pate, slivers of cucumber, daikon, carrot and pork traditionally, but there are versions of chicken, beef and vegetables to cater to larger audiences. Like any Vietnamese dish – the addition of fresh herbs is the signature.
The best spot to eat it is at the popular Bahn Mi 25.

Bahn mi is inspired by the French baguette.

Nem ran and goi cuon – Instagram made the Vietnamese rice paper spring rolls so popular that every visitor to the country looks for goi cuon. The roll has lots of cooked meat or prawn with vegetables and it's almost always DIY so you can assemble the roll as you like it, dunk it in the dipping sauce and enjoy. You also get a fried version of this spring roll called nem ran and it's a crunchy fried snack specially with your bun cha or a chilled Vietnamese local beer.
The best spot to grab these are at Bun Nem Cua Be Huyen Anh, which also serves crab stuff rolls.

Lesser-known gems

Cha ca – not easily found but when you do find it, cha ca is a treat. It's local catfish fried up in turmeric and a green medley of fresh dill and spring onion. Cha ca is served with plenty of condiments and side herbs but this authentic Vietnamese dish is best eaten as is.
The best place to enjoy this is at the restaurant Cha Ca La Vong.

Bun oc nguoi (snail noodle soup) – not for the faint-hearted but for an enthusiastic foodie, this noodle soup comes filled with tender river snails. What sets it apart from other noodle soups is that here the broth is distinctly sour, thanks to the use of tamarind, unlike a pho. It's possibly another culinary discovery during the French colonisation but this is a very distinct Hanoi delicacy that most tourists tend to miss.
Get a taste of this snail soup at Bun Oc Co Them, a no-frills joint.

Banh cuon – a breakfast staple in many Vietnamese houses, this is a delicate almost pancake like rice noodle roll generously stuffed with minced pork and finely chopped wood ear mushrooms. It's perfectly steamed and comes topped with fried shallots. Add a dash of some local garlic vinegar and dunk it in the accompanying dipping sauce for a great bite.
This dish is best eaten at Banh Cuon Ba Xuan.

Special mention: egg coffee

While the food in Hanoi takes centre-stage, their coffee culture demands a special mention. Every street has several coffee shops and cafes with robust coffee menus but the real claim to fame is the Vietnamese Egg Coffee. It sounds outlandish but it actually feels like you are drinking a dessert. Sweet, frothy and served either warm or cold – it's unique and thankfully you can't taste or smell the egg! It's easily found at any café or coffee shop but the most sought after one is at Café Giang.

Quick takes

- Eat at Michelin rated spots; they're mostly inexpensive.
- Opt for an organised food tour so you are not overly intimidated by all the offerings. Having a local guide can help you understand the cuisine better.
- If you are a vegetarian, don't skip the local food out of fear – there are many vegetarian options as well.

Grilled meats that go into a DIY fresh spring roll.

ORIGIN STORY

Tracing the **tamarind's** roots

The tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) is such an integral ingredient of most Indian kitchens that it is often thought of as having originated in India. The story, though, comes with a tangy twist – researchers have noted that the tree is indigenous to Africa. In fact, the Senegalese capital of Dakar gets its name from the word in Wolof language (dakhar) which means tamarind.

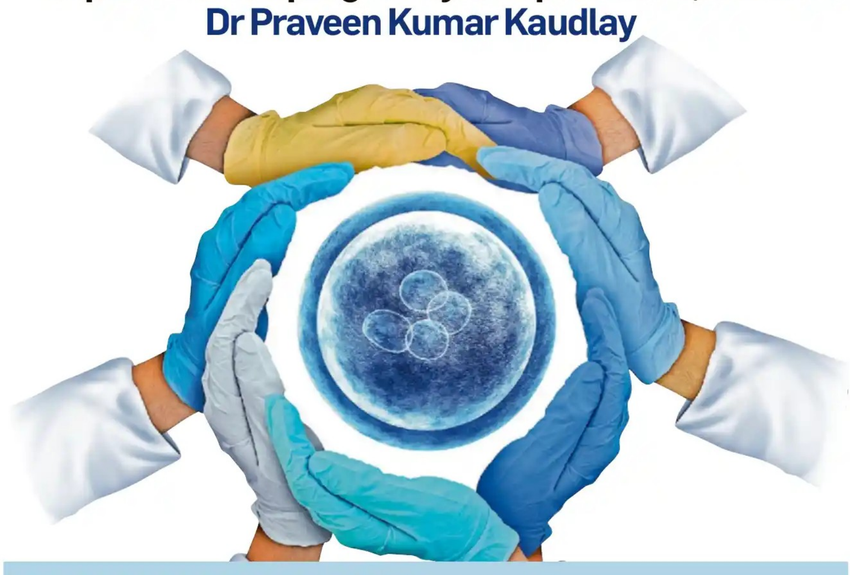
Arab traders, who thought of the tamarind fruit as a date, called it the Indian date, and named it tamar-al-hind aka tamar-i-hind, and took it to other parts of the world as well. The mention of the tamarind in the ancient Indian text, 'Brahma Samhita', is indication that the tree was naturalised millennia ago.

It is now by consensus accepted among botanists that the tree originated in Africa, and came to India, and the rest of the world from there. According to venerated botanist Julia F Morton, who has written 'Fruits of Warm Climates', the tamarind "was so long ago introduced into and adopted in India that it has often been reported as indigenous there also." Irrespective of who brought the tamarind to India, it occupies pride of place in the country's cuisine – be it the ubiquitous tamarind chutney, an accompaniment for chaats, samosas, or puliyogare / pulihora, huli/sambar or saaru/rasam. It is also integral to Southeast Asian cuisine, and added in sauces for pad thai, for instance. Then, there's England's Worcestershire sauce which also uses tamarind paste, but that's another story for another day.

(**Origin Story** *is a column that attempts to satiate your curiosity about the history of a certain ingredient or dish.)*

Therapies that spell good news

Advances in foetal medicine, aided by tools like moelcular diagnostics and advanced imaging, have helped address pregnancy complications, writes Dr Praveen Kumar Kaudlay



The idea of recognising the unborn as the "tiniest human" with societal rights began in the 1970s, led by Professor Sir William Liley of Auckland, New Zealand. A pioneer, he championed the unborn and performed the first in-utero blood transfusion—a milestone that founded foetal medicine.

For centuries, the womb was hidden, with only limited views from ultrasound and little scope to detect or correct abnormalities.

Today, that world is open: foetal medicine has become a sophisticated specialty using advanced imaging, molecular diagnostics, and microsurgery. Professor Kypros Nicolaides, a foetal medicine consultant and founder of the Foetal Medicine Foundation in London, has driven research for four decades. He notes that while 98 per cent of pregnancies bring good news, the two per cent with complications now benefit from significant advances.

Prenatal diagnosis

By analysing cell-free foetal DNA in maternal blood, genetic risks can now be assessed non-invasively during pregnancy. Dr Aparna Sharma, Professor and Unit head in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, at AIIMS, New Delhi, says this blood test can rule out up to 99 per cent of Down syndrome cases, one of the most common causes of intellectual disability among newborns. Screening can start as early as 10 weeks with just a maternal blood sample.

For detailed molecular analysis, invasive procedures like Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS) or amniocentesis may be needed. Dr Sharma notes CVS should be reserved for select cases, particularly single-gene disorders such as thalassemia, sickle cell disease, or spinal muscular atrophy in families with a history. AIIMS performs about 100–150 such procedures yearly. The procedures, when performed correctly, have minimal risk of pregnancy loss.

Advanced imaging

Ultrasound has evolved from a basic monitoring tool into a detailed window into the womb. Bangalore-based Dr (Major) Prakash P Iyer, a foetal medicine consultant, says technological advancements, such as improved penetration colour flow and 3D imaging, allow many anomalies to be detected early, while heart and brain abnormalities are usually identified later, around 22 weeks. Colour Doppler enhances blood flow visualisation.

AI further helps in the standardisation of imaging by automatically measuring organs, reducing operator dependency, and improving diagnostic precision, giving families and clinicians a clearer, more confident view of the developing foetus.

Foetal therapy

Professor Liley pioneered intrauterine transfusion—injecting donor red blood cells into a foetus—to treat Rh isoimmunisation, a condition where maternal antibodies destroy foetal red cells. Sensitisation often begins in the first pregnancy, with later ones at greater risk, leading to severe anaemia, jaundice, or death. Anti-D immunoglobulin prevents this complication, but limited awareness still results in pregnancy losses. These babies, however, can be saved by timely intrauterine transfusions done at specialised centres with excellent outcomes. At AIIMS, nearly 150 such procedures are performed annually—among the highest worldwide. Dr. Sharma recalls a rare case where blood was flown from Japan, saving the baby's life. Once a fatal condition, more than 95 per cent of affected babies now survive thanks to these advances, notes Prof. Nicolaides.

Hope for twins

Twin-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) is a life-threatening condition that occurs in identical twins sharing a placenta. Abnormal blood vessel connections cause one twin to receive excess blood—risking heart failure—while the other is left deprived, leading to anaemia. With laser therapy, doctors can seal off the problematic vessels. This intervention is particularly valuable when one twin is already in distress, helping safeguard the other, explains Dr. Sharma.

Advances

Pre-eclampsia is a pregnancy complication causing high blood pressure that can harm the kidneys and affect foetal growth. Prof. Nicolaides has developed a first-trimester predictive model combining maternal history with biophysical and biochemical markers to identify high-risk individuals; starting aspirin at 12 weeks can significantly reduce risks.

His work also addresses gestational diabetes (GDM), proposing early-risk assessment for personalised interventions. Research is ongoing on in-utero gene therapy for disorders like sickle cell disease and thalassemia, though it remains in developmental stages, complex and costly, according to Prof. Nicolaides.

The road ahead

Despite these remarkable advances, awareness about the availability of foetal therapies in India remains limited. "Too often, families reach specialised centres late in pregnancy, when fewer options are available and outcomes are less certain," notes Dr Iyer. "Approaching the therapy centre early could greatly improve a baby's chances of survival," opines Dr Sharma.

The Society of Foetal Medicine in India has been creating more awareness, improving standards, and sensitising the general public and doctors to the importance of this field.

(The author is a consultant haemato-oncologist with a special interest in stem cell transplantation at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, UK. He can be reached at praveen.kaudlay1@nhs.net.)

Innovative interventions

Foetal medicine has moved beyond twins and blood disorders to include a wide range of in-utero therapies:

- **Congenital diaphragmatic hernia:** A hole in the diaphragm prevents the lungs from developing properly. A balloon placed temporarily in the foetus's airway can aid lung growth.
- **Foetal aortic valve dilatation:** A balloon catheter can dilate narrowed aortic valves, improving blood flow and heart function.
- **Urinary tract obstruction:** Shunts can be placed to drain fluid and preserve kidney function when blockages occur.
- **Spina bifida:** In this condition, the spine and spinal cord fail to develop properly, leaving a gap. Though it is not a cure, early in-utero surgery can minimise the damage to the spinal cord, according to Prof Nicolaides, whose centre has performed 40 such operations. However, it is yet to gain widespread use in India.

These breakthroughs mark a key shift in foetal medicine—from simply observing pregnancies to actively intervening to save lives, apart from improving long-term outcomes.

You forget someone's name mid-sentence or can't recall a crucial fact while making a presentation. You feel like your mind is cluttered and you are feeling confused. Brain fog is a term that's used to describe feelings of confusion, inability to focus on tasks or remember key information, and a general sense of mental exhaustion. Here are some simple tips to help you cope with brain fog and manage its symptoms better:

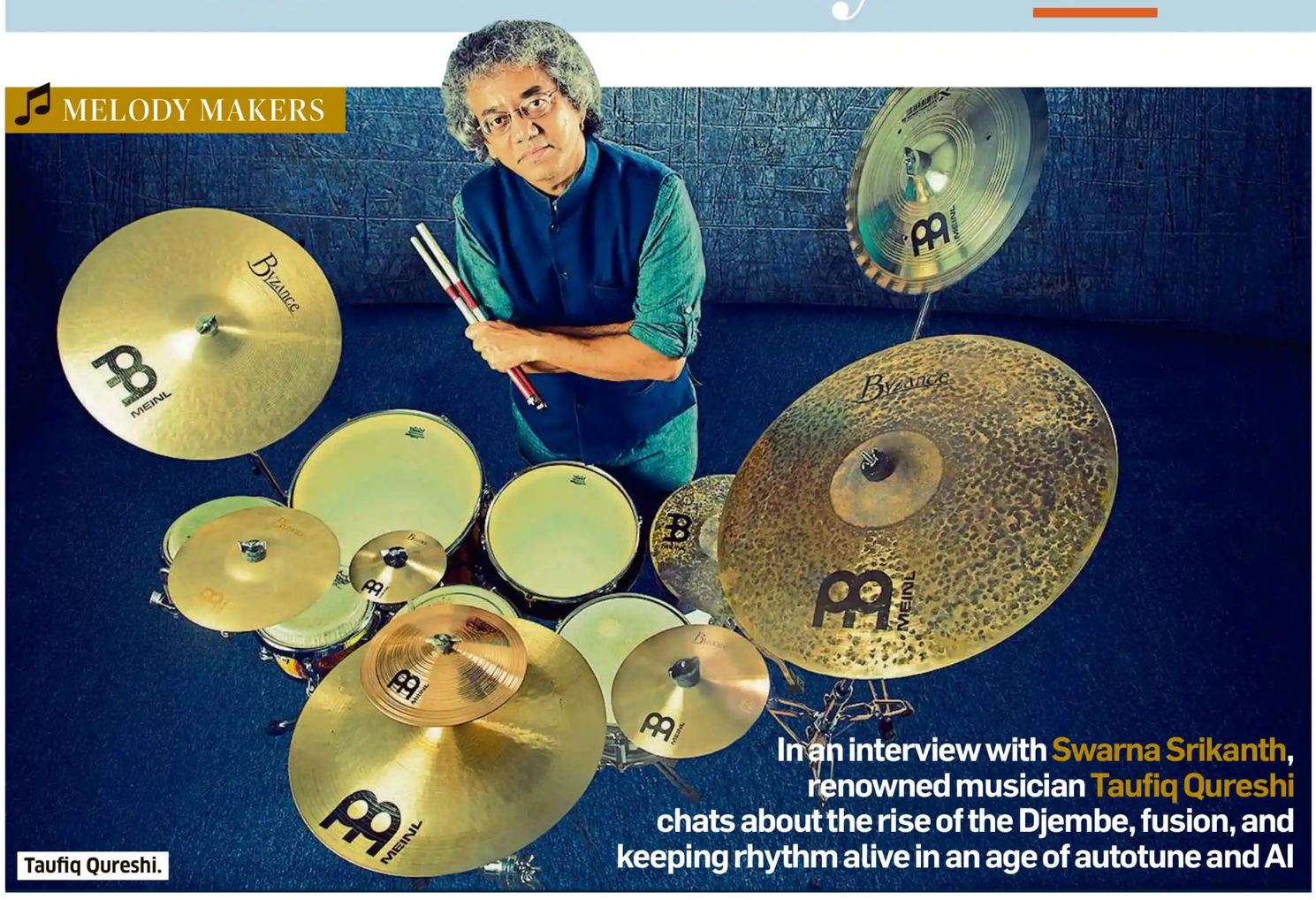
- **Basics:** Stay hydrated, get regular exercise as it boosts blood circulation to the brain, and ensure a healthy and balanced diet that has enough protein, fibre and other nutrients. Limit or avoid consumption of caffeine or alcohol to stay sharper.

BIOHACK OF THE WEEK

- **Sleep:** Try to have some sort of sleep discipline; limit screens at least an hour before bed, create a noise-free bedroom environment and make sure to have the same wake up and sleep schedules, everyday, irrespective of whether it is a day off or not.
- **Brain stimulation:** An active mind helps you focus and remember better, so how about solving that crossword puzzle, reading a book or learning a new skill.
- **Mindful breathing:** Even a five to ten-minute session of mindful breathing helps you regain clarity and stay calm.
- **Meditation:** There are videos and apps that help you with guided meditation techniques which use soothing music and sounds, or even gentle instructions; they help you de-clutter your thoughts.
- **Prioritising tasks:** Pick the most important task of the day and attend to it before moving on to the next task. Have realistic deadlines and get to tasks in their order of importance. Also, schedule in breaks between tasks.
- **Calendars and reminders:** Much as you'd like to stay on top of things, chances are you will still forget something. Use calendars and reminders on your apps to help you schedule the most important tasks so you don't feel overwhelmed.
- **Routines:** Ensure you have some sort of routine going that will help you navigate mental exhaustion and decision fatigue.

(**Biohack of the Week** *offers actionable tips to optimise your wellbeing.)*

MELODY MAKERS



Taufiq Qureshi.

In an interview with Swarna Srikanth, renowned musician Taufiq Qureshi chats about the rise of the Djembe, fusion, and keeping rhythm alive in an age of autotune and AI

Tradition meets tempo

When you think of music, fusion, and percussion, one name instantly comes to mind — Taufiq Qureshi. In fact, his name is synonymous with innovation and rhythm. In an exclusive interview with *DHoS*, the 'Father of Djembe' and pioneer of Indian fusion music shares his insights on the evolution of Indian soundscapes, the integration of global instruments like the Djembe, and the enduring spirit of fusion.
Excerpts:

You have been instrumental in popularising the Djembe. Has it found its mojo in India?
The Djembe is now very popular in India. Around 25 years ago, nobody even knew about the instrument here. When I started playing the Djembe, I began transposing tabla knowledge onto this African drum. Today, I see the Djembe everywhere — in orchestras, on reality shows, in rhythm circles. Even children are picking it up. It's available in music stores in all kinds and varieties, something that wasn't the case even 15 years ago. It's heartening to see that the Djembe has truly found its place in India. I won't say it's because of me alone. My son, Shikhar Naad, and my students have also been instrumental in spreading awareness about it.

A lot of Western instruments have become integral to Indian music – the guitar, the piano, and others. Which instruments, in your view, shine most in our music culture today?
The key instruments that shine in Indian music are, of course, our own — the sitar, flute, sarod, sarangi, and santoor. Among percussion instruments, the tabla continues to hold a special place in classical music. As for Western instruments, the violin, guitar, and mandolin (popularised here by Uppalapu Srinivas) have all been embraced within the Indian classical framework. The Djembe, too, is now being recognised as an instrument capable of performing tabla repertoire within the classical field.

During a concert.

Playing the Djembe.

How open are Indian audiences to fusion?
Indian audiences are very open-hearted and open-minded when it comes to fusion. If they sense that tradition is being presented respectfully — that we're not tampering with its essence — they readily embrace it. For instance, the Djembe is now seen both as a solo instrument and as an accompanying one with the sitar, santoor, and flute. The key is to balance innovation with reverence.

Is fusion music the current trend? Do you ever feel it's been diluted over time?
Fusion is indeed the current tradition. Classical music, too, remains strong — even though, 30 years ago, many feared it would fade away. It hasn't, and it never will. Whatever fusion we do, our roots will always be classical, because that's the tradition we've learned. Fusion doesn't dilute music — not when done right. When we merge genres thoughtfully, we actually bring their best qualities forward.

Take Raag Yaman, for instance — a deeply traditional raga, yet the foundation for countless timeless film songs: *Jab Deep Jale Aana, Abhi Na Jao Chhodkar, Aaj Jaane Ki Zid Na Karo*. But if we treat the raga only as a vehicle for film songs, that's when dilution happens. The goal is to retain the strength of the 'Raagdari' while exploring new expressions. Fusion has always been part of Indian music. From Dhrupad and Dhamar evolving into Khayal Gayaki, to the Pakhavaj giving way to the tabla — evolution has always been a kind of fusion.

When my father, Ustad Alla Rakha, and Pandit Ravi Shankar collaborated with Yehudi Menuhin and John Handy, or when the Beatles embraced Indian music — that was fusion too. Later, Zakir Bhai, John McLaughlin, L Shankar, and Vikku Vinayakram took it to a whole new level with *Shakti*. In the 80s and 90s, fusion truly came into its own. I continue to carry that legacy forward through my bands, Surya and Mumbai Stamp.

What's your take on autotune and software-based fine-tuning in music?
I hate autotune! Back then, there was no autotune, yet we loved those songs, didn't we? When Pancham Da sang in his wonderfully distorted voice, or when Mukeshji went slightly kan-sur (off-pitch), we still cherished it — because there was a feeling in that imperfection. Today, autotune makes things too easy. AI, too, is fascinating — but it still lacks spontaneity. When I'm on stage, I respond to the audience's pulse. What happens in my head at that moment translates instantly into rhythm — that's something AI simply can't replicate.

Do instrumentalists sometimes take a backseat while the spotlight stays on vocalists?
Yes, many feel that singing automatically brings more attention. So everyone wants to sing — and that's fine. But if everyone sings, who will play the instruments? We need that balance to preserve the beauty of both forms.

Something you miss about Zakir Bhai?
What I miss most is sharing the stage with him. Because of his busy schedule, I couldn't spend as much time learning from him as I'd have liked. But every performance with him was a masterclass — a day of immense learning and inspiration. Whenever I was with him, that day felt complete.

ESOTERICA *A monthly exploratory infographic for the always curious*

THE TRACKING TECH ON HEIST GANGS' TRAIL

Turns out Paris' Louvre Museum has had one item in its great collection of antiques and antiquities the world likely didn't know about – it's security system. Last Sunday's daylight jewel theft there has revealed spectacular surveillance flaws, including outdated alarms and blind spots in camera grids.

But the good news is hereon, it may no longer be a walk in the gallery for the thieves. Be it priceless paintings or royal jewels, modern-day recovery operations increasingly unfold not in chase scenes, but across digital landscapes. As stolen art and artifacts increasingly leave behind digital shadows, the classic image of the trench-coated detective is giving way to the data scientist. Recoveries that once took decades can now happen in days – not through luck, but through layers of metadata.

Global Dragnet of Databases

Deep-learning AI models, originally designed for facial recognition, are now being trained on brushstrokes, engraving patterns, and carving styles to detect forged signatures on artwork or digitally altered reproductions. Interpol and several museums have started feeding images of missing works into shared AI databases that flag potential matches when items appear in sales catalogues or social media images.

Apps like Interpol's "ID-Art" allow collectors, customs agents, and even tourists to snap photos of suspicious treasures and instantly cross-reference more than fifty thousand missing items.

Digital Titles

Using blockchain, the technology behind cryptocurrencies, tamper-proof, decentralised ledgers of the purchase history of valuable art and artifacts are being created. These "digital titles" make laundering of artworks through a legitimate market impossible, as their illicit status is permanently and publicly recorded.

Digital Twins

Today, most museums maintain a forensic archive – the complete 3D scans and spectral fingerprints of every artwork or artifact they own. If a theft occurs, the digital twins can be used to trace the stolen items from auction listings in the open market.

In November 2019, diamond jewellery worth $120 million was stolen from the Green Vault in Dresden, Germany. When fragments of the stolen jewels resurfaced, forensic experts could compare microscopic imperfections in the gemstones to the archived scans.

Digital Fingerprints

Valuable artwork and artifacts are increasingly being provided various kinds of invisible security signatures to aid recovery should theft occur.

Hyperspectral imaging: Museums and auction houses have started using a technique that captures light far beyond the visible spectrum to create a unique "fingerprint" of an artwork. This spectral signature is impossible to forge. If a missing piece resurfaces, even after some degree of alteration, the digital fingerprint can provide irrefutable proof of identity.

Custom microdots: Particles as small as a grain of sand containing a unique ID number and ownership details are now being applied to really small valuable items like jewellery. These dots are invisible to the naked eye and cannot be removed without damaging the object.

Microtags: In the case of jewellery, nanoparticles or RFID chips are embedded into the metal or stone. Each chip carries an immutable ID code, readable even after a piece has been recut or reset.

Some of the jewellery stolen from the Louvre Museum last Sunday
Pic courtesy: Wikimedia

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MUSEUM MATTERS

Posing questions to god

Forget the adage that "cleanliness is next to godliness". Graffiti — of a sort — is now welcomed at the spiritual home of global Anglicanism in southeast England, to the ire of US Vice President JD Vance.

A new exhibition of graffiti-style artworks posing ordinary people's questions to God now adorns the hallowed walls of Canterbury Cathedral and has invited controversy all the way from southeast England to Washington DC. Featuring eternal human queries like "why all the suffering?" and "are you there?", they mark the pillars and walls of the crypt of the sixth-century cathedral in Kent, southeast of London. The scrawls, some black-and-white and others brightly coloured, contrast with the grand stone edifices and stained-glass windows.

A graffiti-style artwork inside the cathedral. (AFP pic)

Exhibition curator Jacquiline Creswell told *AFP* she would love visitors "to spend some time looking at the questions, trying to understand the questions".

"What I'd like most of all is for them to feel empowered to pose their own question to God," she added.

Creswell noted that the graffiti echoes the inscriptions that parishioners and pilgrims have carved into the walls of the building for centuries, such as crosses and christograms — many of which are still visible in the crypt.

Poet Alex Vellis spent several months working with sometimes marginalised local communities, to arrive at the questions on display.

Some challenge faith while others question the role of religion, as well as whether there is life after death. Inside the cathedral, which is welcoming its first female archbishop, Sarah Mullally, visitors' reactions were mixed.

Vance branded it "really ugly" on X, while the platform's billionaire owner, Elon Musk, argued it was symptomatic of a "relentless anti-Western propaganda" trend in which people "suicide their own culture".

AFP

DISCOVER INDIAN ART

The slow fade of a sacred sonic legacy

The rapturous sounds of the Rudra veena made it particularly popular in Tantric traditions across India. Today, very few Rudra veena maestros remain

The Rudra veena, also known as the 'been', is a historical stringed musical instrument, with few active practitioners today. It is a stick zither contraption, associated with the Dhrupad genre of Hindustani classical music.

Originating in northern India, it is named after Rudra, the fierce form of Shiva. It is believed that Ravana built and played this veena to pay homage to Shiva and named it after him. Another story posits that Shiva himself created the instrument, inspired by the beauty of Parvati, his consort. While the veena is mentioned in the Natyashastra (2nd century CE) and the medieval text Sangita Makaranda, and depicted in murals at Ajanta Caves, the Rudra veena seems to have been played only in limited circles for worship and courtly ceremonies.

An illustration from the Ragamala Series; Mughal, India, 1740.
PIC COURTESY: CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

A 'been' player, William Gibb (1891).
PIC COURTESY: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

By the 19th century, the Rudra veena's popularity declined with the introduction of the surbahar and the sitar, and the dominance of Khayal over the Dhrupad genre of Hindustani music. The Rudra veena has two distinctive globular resonators on either end, made of dried gourds, and is connected by a wooden, tubular body that has 24 raised frets. Traditionally, it had four main playing strings and three drone or sympathetic strings. Some modern instruments include an eighth string for tonal enhancement. When its strings are plucked, the Rudra veena emits a sonorous, bassy sound.

The few 19th- and 20th-century Rudra veenas intact today are embellished with delicate floral carvings, which reflect the baroque sensibilities of the time. Now it takes over six months to create one Rudra veena, and it is therefore not only rare but also expensive.

The instrument was traditionally played while being seated in vajrasana (a kneeling yoga posture), and the beam was placed diagonally, with the upper resonator on the left shoulder and the lower resonator resting on the right thigh. It was a physically and psychologically demanding process, wherein the player was required to coordinate their breathing and bodily movements. Extended practice in traditional postures could lead to physical strain, prompting the development of modified playing positions. A new posture called sukhasana (a cross-legged yoga position) was later developed, where the angle of tilt was corrected and the upper resonator was placed on the right thigh and the lower resonator on the floor.

Shiva and Parvati playing Rudra veenas, 1800–99.
PIC COURTESY: WELLCOME COLLECTION

While the instrument still required utmost concentration, playing it became slightly easier. The rapturous sounds of the Rudra veena made it particularly popular in Tantric traditions across India. In the 20th century, Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar was credited with the revival of the Rudra veena as a solo instrument played in concerts. The recordings of another master player, Dattatreya Rama Rao Parvatikar, are now part of the UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music of the World. Today, very few Rudra veena maestros remain, as the instrument is notoriously difficult to master.

Shrey Maurya, MAP Academy

Discover Indian Art *is a monthly column that delves into fascinating stories on art from across the subcontinent, curated by the editors of the MAP Academy. Find them on Instagram as @map_academy*

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